This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

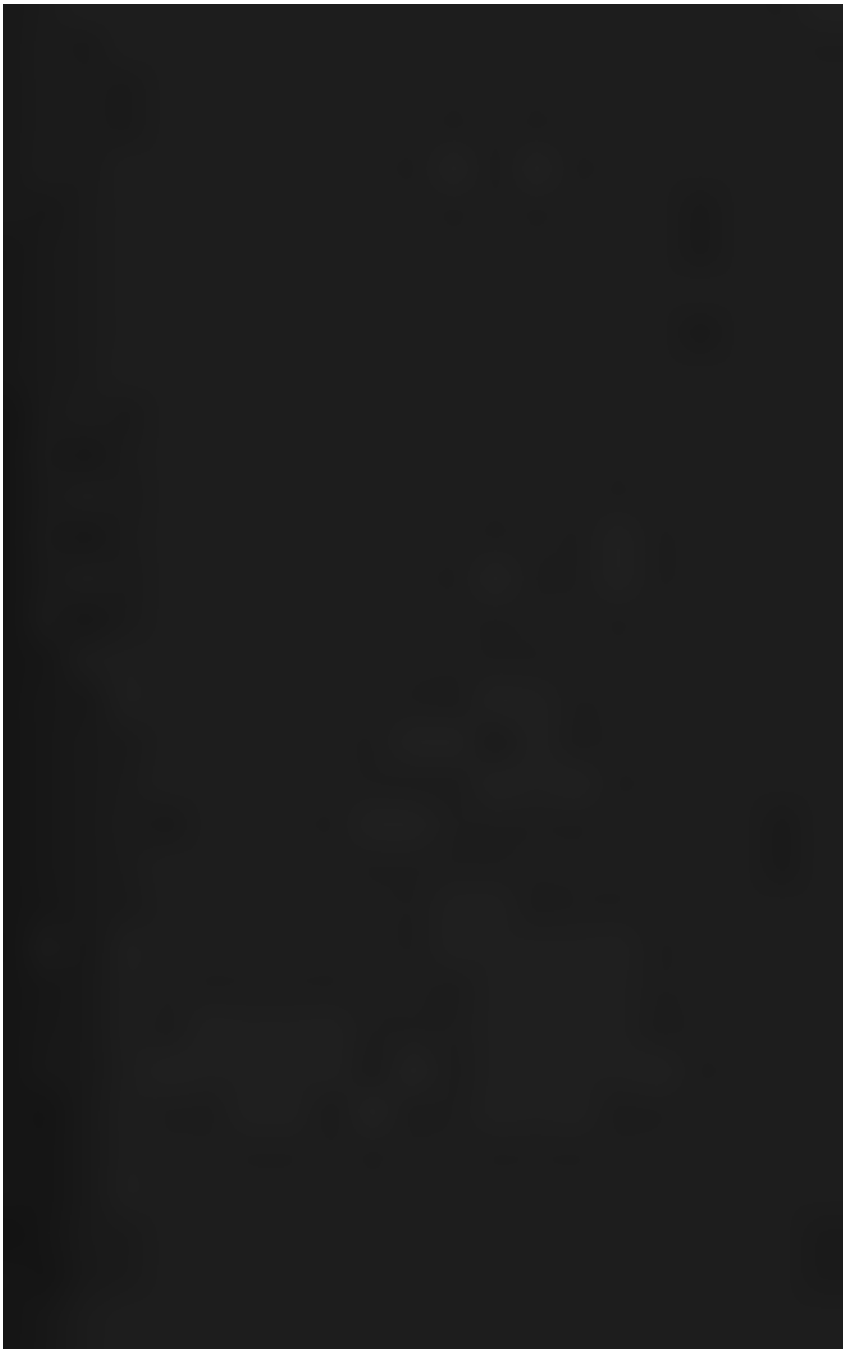
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

600072505P



LOST AND SAVED.

VOL. II.

LONDON
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE

LOST AND SAVED.

BY

THE HON. MRS. NORTON,

AUTHOR OF

"STUART OF DUNLEATH,"

&c.

MEPHISTOPHELES.—Sie iſt gerichtet!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.—Iſt gerettet!

She is lost!

Is saved!

GOETHE'S *Faust.*

Fourth Edition.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,

SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1863.

The right of Translation is reserved.

250. 0. 127.

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

CONTENTS

OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Brother's Love	1
II.	Lover's Love	21
III.	The World's Judgments	40
IV.	Trehearne justifies himself	66
V.	Milly Nesdale	77
VI.	Diamond cut Diamond	98
VII.	Trehearne not a Domestic Character	118
VIII.	Beatrice is jealous	141
IX.	Women who keep their Reputation	156
X.	The Storm Cloud	177
XI.	A Day at Richmond	188
XII.	The Night Watch	198
XIII.	The Complete Letter-writer	212

CHAP.		PAGE
XIV.	Sans Adieu	228
XV.	Forsaken	248
XVI.	Beatrice wishes to earn her own Bread .	259
XVII.	The Humble Companion	282

LOST AND SAVED.

CHAPTER I.

BROTHER'S LOVE.

Outside that other door—outside Montagu Treherne's threshold—pacing up and down, as pale as herself, looking up with questioning eyes at the windows, was Owen Brooke. He saw her; he came rapidly towards her.

"Oh, Beatrice! come home, come home!" was all he could say. And Beatrice answered wildly,

"I do not know what my father may decide about me. Come in here a moment. How did you know where to look for me?"

"I heard you say last night to the coachman, 'Stratton Street;' and I remembered that Montagu

Treherne lived there. I could not doubt—but oh! Beatrice, come home. We have expected you all day; and when dinner time came and you did not appear, my father went out. Come home, dear! If Montagu Treherne will not come to my poor father, he is a villain."

"Owen, he cannot; our marriage was not legal, it seems;" (even then Beatrice could not bear to admit that Montagu was *a villain*). "He has written me a letter of explanation."

"Has he appointed a day to marry you legally?"

"No,—but he will; I am sure he will."

"Where is he?"

"He is gone out of town for a day."

"Leaving you!—leaving you after that distressful yesterday! Where, then, have you been?"

"I have been with his aunt, Lady Updown. I thought—it is a long story, and I will tell it you another time—I thought she would know if our marriage could be proved."

"Proved! I will kill him. I will challenge him, and shoot him. He thinks, perhaps, because I am a mere boy, he can laugh at me,—but I can feel a wrong and fire a pistol, as well as an older man."

"You would only disgrace me for ever, Owen, and kill the man I look upon as my husband. I am sure he will make me his lawful wife. It is only my father's anger I am dreading—his anger, and his sorrow."

"And why did not Lady Updown bring you home?"

"She is gone to a great ball at Belvidere House; it was to begin early. The Queen is to be there. Besides, I have a letter to leave here."

"The Queen?"

"Yes; it made Lady Updown impatient about the hour."

"Too impatient to think of such a sorrow, Beatrice!" said the boy, with a scornful smile.

Beatrice shook her head.

"My dear Owen, before I go home with you (if,

indeed, my father will receive me), I have a letter, as I tell you, to write here, and to leave here. It will not take me long, if you like to wait."

She tried to write without tears, but could not. Owen rose, and restlessly paced the apartment—went to the window and muttered, "At the ball, with the Queen;" —then he went to the writing table and drew a sheet of paper towards him, wrote a note, and carefully sealed it. He put it in his bosom, and spoke to Beatrice.

"My dear, I only interrupt you; I will walk round the park and come back for you here, and we will go home together. You promise me that?"

"I promise."

Owen ran down stairs, walked rapidly down the street, across the Green Park to the very gates of Buckingham Palace. A great crowd had assembled to see the royal carriage issue out from the gates. He was in time. The Queen had not yet set out for the ball.

In time for what? Not for the show. Owen

was in no mood for shows, eager and loyal though his boyish heart might be. He was "in time" to act the wild romantic scheme which had shot up like a sudden flame in his mind after listening to his sister; while watching her suffocated tears, and thinking of the fine lady going forth to that magnificent scene of gaiety, leaving this girl to moan and strive.

Treherne's aunt! Was this to be the mode in which the ladies of that family were to take the disgrace of Captain Brooke's daughter? Was this to be the mode in which gentlemen of noble English blood were to act with impunity?

Beatrice had spoken truly; if he killed Treherne, he would only publish and seal her disgrace. But he would make that traitor fulfil his vows to his sister. He would make him satisfy his father. The Queen!—she was going to this ball! This ball, where the good and the bad of her aristocracy were to meet on common ground, like the tares and wheat of Scripture. He would appeal to the Queen! He had heard and read of such things.

Of women flinging themselves before the horses of kings and emperors, begging a son's or a husband's life; of interviews granted, in spite of stiff court rules, to despairing petitioners, who prayed to those Anointed Ones as fervently as to Heaven, finding them with almost as much apparent power over their destiny.

Flitting through his excited brain went many a tale of Roman history, and German tradition, and Napoleonesque romance; the sweet story of Elizabeth of Siberia; and a thousand instances of pardons granted, innocence justified, oppression put down, and wrongs redressed, by the lifting of a sceptre, by the speaking of a stern majestic word. Boyish gatherings; half truth and half fiction—culled from among the faded traditions of kings who had reigned as "fathers of their people"—not as idols of brass and clay set upon thrones.

The days of tournaments and ploughshare proofs are over! So are the days of witchcraft, when the poor witch lost either way at the game of

justification; for if she swam, she was reckoned guilty, and executed; and if she sank, of course she was drowned. With these have passed also the days (if they ever existed) when monarchs, at the last moment, forbade the cutting off of some particular head, already within hail of the block; and bestowed the hands of their male and female subjects with as much peremptory decision as the King of France in "All's well that ends well," when he marries the recalcitrant Bertram to Doctor Gerard de Narbon's love-sick daughter.

But though these things have passed away in fact,—in the imagination of the ignorant and the inexperienced they still vaguely exist. The "sighing of the poor prisoner" in Newgate, still connects "the Queen's pardon"—not with the preparation of legal forms and the decision of legal authorities, but with an actual amnesty from the throne; and the feebler and worst informed portion of her Majesty's subjects firmly believe that among the excellent powers conferred by

"divine right," is that of righting their wrongs by her personal interference.

Owen Brooke was not more stupid or ignorant than other young midshipmen of his age; but he somehow imagined that an appeal to the Queen might be followed by her Majesty's compelling Treherne to do justice to his sister.

Thinking so, he acted on that thought. He was like Beatrice. Such natures will not await the coming event; they cannot watch the subtle alchemy of brooding days, even though the chance of a golden hour lie there. They are for ever wrestling before dawn with the dark angel of Destiny,—reckless if their victory shall send them lamed and limping from Peniel.

His mother's blood ran in Owen's veins—that southern blood which, if it have not all the exaggeration of qualities attributed to "the land of the cypress and myrtle," has at least a quickness unknown to calmer souls. Love, with such natures, is a delirium—so is anger—so is jealousy; even their pity is a passion. The warm Spanish blood

is full of the spirit of intrigue; but the Italian has the simplicity of a child in all that touches the affections, and the rash eagerness of a child in all plans for their satisfaction.

Owen's hope might be a vain dream, like the hope of many an older and wiser sufferer; but the chance of that hope's fulfilment lay in his own unaided energy; or so he thought.

He took the letter he had written from his bosom, and he took from his purse a small pebble, with a green cord run through a hole pierced in the stone. He twisted the cord round the folded paper, and waited and watched. He thought over the words of his letter—whether it was too long—whether it sufficiently expressed the urgent necessity of his case—whether it was addressed properly; being directed, in a round fair hand, to Her Gracious Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland. It was headed, "The petition of Owen Brooke, Midshipman of H.M.S. 'Enterprise,' now resident in Spring Gardens, Charing Cross"— and was couched in these terms—

"May it please your Majesty,—I write to beseech an audience. My grandfather and grand-uncle were Admirals in the Royal Navy. One was killed in action, and one lost an arm and a leg in the service. My father is a Captain in the army. He fought at Waterloo, and was severely wounded. He was made a Captain on the field. I wish to speak with your Majesty about some family wrongs, which I cannot commit to paper. It is more than a matter of life and death; it is a matter of honour. I implore your Majesty, most ardently and most humbly, to see me at your Palace to-morrow, and let me explain this great grief. And your petitioner will ever pray.

"Owen Brooke.

"P.S.—The stone to which this letter is tied is a pebble from the coast of Madagascar, where H.M.S. 'Enterprise' was nearly lost; on which occasion I was so happy as to save the lives of eight able seamen, and have been favourably mentioned on that account, through the kindness of my superior officers."

A cry from the eager crowd of "The Queen! the Queen!" roused Owen from reverie to action. It was a sweet summer night, breathless and warm. The windows of the carriages were open. Owen pressed to the front of the crowd, and as the Royal carriage passed, amid the vociferous cheers of the delighted multitude, he raised his arm and flung his letter, fastened and weighted as it was, right in the direction of the carriage window!

His aim was too good to have failed of its intent, but that, at the very instant of projection, the watchful eye of the police noticed the boy's gesture. His arm was seized with a grasp of iron; the pebble fell short, and hit the edge of the panel instead of entering the window. The sharp sound of its striking, light as it was, was enough to alarm the ear. "Seize him!"—"Hold him!"—"Some one has fired a shot at the Queen!"—"Drag him down!"—"That's the lad!"—"Her Majesty has been fired at!"—"Monster!"—"You'll be hung for this!"—"Stand out of the

way of the horses!"—and a thousand similar contradictory cries rose around him. A moment of unutterable confusion followed. He was pulled, pummelled, cuffed, collared, and bruised; and when, at length, something like order was restored, when instead of half-a-dozen vigorous arms grappling him at once, he found himself panting in the grasp of a single sergeant of police, with another tall sergeant in possession of "the missile he had flung at the Queen" as they termed his unlucky letter with its pebble weight,—he was marched off to the station.

It was of no use attempting to explain. No one would listen to him; no one would believe him; and if they had believed, they could do nothing; it was their duty merely to see the charge entered in the police sheet, and lodge him in a secure cell for the night.

His wrist was strained, swollen, and bruised. The police sergeant had, as he expressed it, "little lads of his own," and was sorry the boy had been

so roughly handled. He dipped Owen's handkerchief in some vinegar and water, and bound the hand up. He then looked at him in silence.

"Well, now, what *could* put it into the head of a young gent like you, to do such a thing? You 'd better send to some of your friends, afore it gets any later."

Owen wrote a note to his father, begging him not to be anxious; that he was in custody on the mistaken supposition that he had flung a missile at the Royal carriage; that he could "rough it" for the night in his cell, with a very clear conscience as to any want of love or loyalty to his sovereign; and in the morning he hoped his father would come and bail him out.

Fain would he also have sent to Beatrice—but how could he? Could he direct "to Miss Brooke," and send it to Treherne's lodgings? And if he sent the vague message that "the young gentle-

man who called was unable to rejoin the lady," it would infallibly create wonder and inquiry. Neither did he like Beatrice to know he had been taken to the station-house. Perhaps by this time Treherne would have returned from Putney, and would see her to the door of home, as he did the night before. Or she might already have gone home to avoid his return—and *that* was Owen's best hope!

The time seemed interminable before the door of the cell re-opened, and the watch informed Owen that his note had been delivered, but that the gentleman he had written to was out, so it was left; that was all.

"Out? still out—so late!"

The boy vainly endeavoured to compose himself to rest. His arm throbbed and thrilled with pain, and his heart ached thinking of his plan for helping Beatrice; thinking of his baffled hope; thinking of the gay ball to which the carriages had all moved on, leaving him and his luckless letter in the guard of the police; leaving her to tears;

to tears—his light-hearted sister that ran races with him on the sands at Tenby!

And Beatrice sat thinking of him, as he thought of her; thinking of him; waiting for him; wondering he did not come.

Her letter, too, had been written! written and locked away in the Venetian casket. It said:—

"I have your letter, Montagu. If what it contains had been written *of* you, instead of by you, no oaths would have made me believe it. As it is, I have doubted even what you tell me of yourself! I have no worse words with which to reproach you.

"As to my illness, during which this terrible deception took place—would that I once more lay dying in that distant land—unrescued by such means from my approaching doom, so that I died with my trust in you unbroken. Sickness and pain—what were *they* to what I feel at this hour?

"I write, and leave my letter as you bid me. I

will not come to-morrow, nor on any morrow. Not out of 'bitterness and resentment,'—as you phrase it,—*but I will never come again, unless as a wife, to the house I imagined was my husband's home.* It is for you to come and claim me, to make me your wife. If my father will mercifully shelter me, you will find me with him. If he exiles me as a disgraced creature, you will at least learn what has become of me. Under no other circumstances will I ever voluntarily see you again. I have loved you as dearly as ever woman loved man—passionately I have loved you! The sound of your voice, the sound even of your step on the stair, held all earth's music for me. I have loved the very shawl I wore when we have walked together—the veil that the summer wind floated from my cheek to yours—the books that you have touched—the pictures your eyes have rested on; but I will never see you again—NEVER! unless you come and claim me as my father's daughter has a right to be claimed—as your child's mother has a right to expect to be claimed. Oh,

Montagu! consider well: a brief two months is all that divides me from that crowning sorrow and irrevocable shame—and you still speak of delays and 'possibilities!' There are but two possibilities for us on earth:—that you should redeem the past, and make our marriage a truth, and so bid the sun of life shine out again; or that you should leave me for ever to the darkness of despair and disgrace.

"BEATRICE."

When that was written and locked away, the restless heart began to beat again: to quake with new terrors, as the time passed on and the face of her handsome young brother never shone like a star of hope among the few passers by on whose features the lamplight fell, when the sound of footsteps drew Beatrice starting to the window. What could detain him? Oh God! if her father had seen him, and forbidden him to come! If her father had resolved never to receive her again,

after this blank day—this day on which she had absented herself utterly from home, after promising him perfect consolation and free confiding; after undertaking that her HUSBAND should come, and that she should stand in their mutual presence a happy wife!

Owen! Owen! the dear young brother—play-fellow in her gay sprightly girlhood, she then a little younger than her years; friend in these later times of his sea-going and returning, he now a little older than his years. What if her father had learned from some other source that she was not really married, and had bid Owen distrust all she could say, that one assertion being proved a falsehood!

"Owen! dear Owen!" Beatrice could not help exclaiming aloud, as she dropped her weary head in her hands, and felt that the extreme lateness of the hour made it *impossible*, let what would be the cause of his absence, that he would now return. Should she venture home alone—and at

such an hour? Surely yes; for how could she stay where she now was; and where else could she go? Her father could only refuse to see her; he could not thrust her out into the street. And Mariana would patiently expect her. Mariana, with her sweet, pale, watchful face, would be waiting now, whatever else was to happen.

Beatrice would go home, then, directly; it was of no use expecting Owen any more; and if she lingered, Treherne might return! She drew her black silk mantle round her with a shudder; she felt wonderfully ill; she had had no food all day. She reached the bell and rang it; and said faintly to the servant-girl —

"Will you tell Mr. Treherne I have written to the person he requested me to write to,—and will you get me a cab?"

She was still standing as she spoke; but before the maid could obey the order, she tottered forwards, and sank in a swoon to the ground.

The frightened girl made no attempt to lift

her, but running down stairs, burst into the landlady's room, with —

"Oh, ma'm! do come up directly—there's a young lady a-dying in the front drawing-room!"

CHAPTER II.

LOVER'S LOVE.

ANOTHER morning had dawned. It is already four o'clock, and the magnificent ball at Belvidere House is thinning rapidly of its numbers. Carriages are no longer cutting in and cutting out, amidst the energetic protestations of their inmates, the curses of their coachmen, and the authoritative interference of the police. Sweeping swiftly up to the noble portico, each receives its freight, and sweeps as swiftly away; and the glittering dresses and bare shoulders of the ladies, and smart diplomatic uniforms and stars of the gentlemen, look strange in the natural light. The fresh young faces have heavy lids to their bright young

eyes, and the withered old faces have heavy cheeks, and a "drookit" look, which no gorgeousness of apparel can somehow efface.

Treherne comes out of that house. Yes, Treherne. Not that he went there for pleasure, or would have cared to miss it, even had he not been anxious and "out of sorts," but because it was one of the necessities of his world that he *should* be there; and he had been reminded of it at dinner at Putney, and urged to go, on account of the new ambassador, and Viennese colleagues and diplomatic interests, and persons he was to be presented to, and persons who had spoken of him, and who looked forward to meeting him, and because it would "look odd" if he stayed away—all that group of majesty, foreign and English, and all the "élite of the nobility" attending. So he dressed at his club; as indeed he often did, but was more especially bent on doing that night because he thought if he went home he might find some reproachful letter in the Venetian casket, and it was time enough to read anything disagreeable, after

he could get an hour or two to himself, and not just as he was compelled to "make the agreeable" among eight hundred acquaintances. He hoped the best; he hoped that Beatrice *might* have left a line merely promising to come next morning, and "talk over possibilities," for he knew how passionately she loved him; but he did not feel sure; not sure enough to do so un-Treherne-ish a thing as expose himself to the chance of pain which could be avoided.

His stars, however, were unpropitious that night; for he had to endure pain, and provocation, and anger too, even at the ball where he meant to evade them.

He danced with Helen Wollingham; who could not get leave to remain at home invalided on so great an occasion. She looked beautiful, but very delicate, and was very silent. She asked him as they stood up for a quadrille, "if he still saw much of Beatrice Brooke?" He turned sharply round, and hesitated; then he said rather sulkily, "Of course;" that *he* was not going to drop the

Brooke family as Lady Eudocia had done. The rest of the figure was danced without further attempt at conversation. Then Helen Wollingham said in a low tone of voice, "Do you know if Maurice Lewellyn is coming?" Again, with a sharp, angry, conscious glance, Treherne turned and looked at his cousin. She blushed and averted her eyes. Had Lewellyn already disclosed to the Wollinghams his awkward meeting with Beatrice?

Helen's delicate cheeks paled again, and she said quietly, "I only asked because he is not here; and I know he received a card for this ball a fortnight ago, and meant to come. I suppose he is gone to see his father and mother off; they went by the express this afternoon to Dover with poor Mr. Lewellyn; perhaps he is fatigued and they mean to sleep there."

Treherne was relieved; he felt sure Helen, at least, had heard nothing about him and Beatrice; and he was excessively glad to find Sir Bertie and Lady Di Lewellyn were actually gone.

But as he led Helen back to her place by her

mother, fresh disturbance awaited him. Lady Eudocia's back was turned, she was talking eagerly to the Marchioness. They were "chattering like pyets," and continued chattering; not even remarking the approach of the young dancers; their eyes clashing again and again at each other in the heat of argument, as if gunflints had been struck together to produce sparks. The words "Beatrice Brooke," — "Montagu," — "Central Station," — "impossible falsehood," — "forced her way in, while I was dressing," — "sobbed like a maniac" — "all your fault for having her to that ball last year" — "could do no more than take the trouble to tell you immediately," greeted Treherne's ear, in rapid phrases of suppressed loudness. "What is all this?" he said, with something of the hard imperious look that made him occasionally resemble so closely his aunt Eudocia. "What is all this?"

"Humph! here he is, Eudocia; and you may ask him yourself if it is true, for I 'm sure I shan't,' said the Marchioness, sullenly.

"I *will* ask him, and that this moment! You will at least be good enough to take charge of Helen, I suppose, while I speak to him. She 's not to dance the next dance, she 's to rest. Montagu, I want to ask you a question;" and Lady Eudocia, crimson with anger and excitement, led the way out on the balcony, followed by her nephew.

What a calm moonlight night it was! Shining down on those angry faces, and opposing the ineffectual freshness of its light breeze to the puffs of warm vapour, made up of a thousand essences from a thousand different toilette tables and the breath of a thousand crowded human beings, which ever and anon saluted the morning through those open windows!

"Beatrice Brooke has been to The Marchioness this evening before she came here, and told her in the very presence of Parkes, that she was your wife. Now, I ask you as a gentleman, whether that is true or not?"

Fierce, abrupt, her hard eyes defyingly fixed on his eyes, waiting his reply.

She did not wait long; no beacon-fire, flashing from hill to hill quick rallyings for war, ever woke a speedier answering flame. Intense anger thrilled hotly through Treherne's breast. The sudden picture of Beatrice's "vehemence" taking a turn he had never dreamed of; braving him with a vengeful effort at ruin, by denouncing him to the members of his own family; compelling him to a public avowal of his connection with her, and doubtless to public amends; a picture of Beatrice, proud, passionate, strong, and defying; rushing, perhaps with his very letter in her hand, to the house of this scornful fine lady, to claim her "rights" and profess herself the triumphant obstacle to all their worldly schemes, and all his worldly prosperity, filled his mind.

Beatrice as a sort of Norma—a maddened Bianca—a beautiful curse—for whose love he would have to pay a price such as no woman, were she Venus and all the Muses combined, could ever be worth. Beatrice as he had never seen her,—but as he could vaguely imagine even *she* might

become, when told that she "was not really married,"—such a Beatrice flashed before Treherne's eyes! Came as all thoughts come—came like the lightning; and he gave his soul no pause of heavenward gazing, before he answered, with such vehement loudness that Helen Wollingham heard and started,—"She did? Well then, I swear before God, and on the honour of a gentleman, that she is *not* my wife!"

Before God, and on the honour of a gentleman.

There was a pause. Lady Eudocia broke it by muttering, rather than saying, "Nevertheless, your uncle Caërlaverock wrote to me to put me on my guard against the intrigues of this girl; and to tell me of some very foolish scene that took place between him and you; and to advise me——"

Treherne set his teeth. "Aunt Eudocia, I forbid you ever to mention this subject to me again, if you expect me to remain on speaking terms with you!"

That sentence, also, was spoken with such reckless exasperation, that it was completely audible to the Marchioness and Helen; and Lady Eudocia, confounded by a passion even greater than her own, and afraid of the next result being the attention of "the world" to the very disagreeable scene taking place between such near relations, hastily re-entered the ball-room and resumed her seat.

Tréherne also passed in from the balcony. For a moment he paused, opposite the incrusted ball-dress of the Marchioness, and fixed his haughty handsome eyes on her face, as if he thought to ask her some question; but if he had any such intention, he changed his mind—and making his way with a sort of fierce patience through the crowd,—answering a rapid observation here, and submitting to the delay of an introduction there; assenting to the too notorious truth that it was "very hot," and promising to "be sure and call my carriage" to ten weary chaperons in succession; pouring out a tumbler full of champagne, and swallowing it

at a draught, as he passed through the supper-room; looking out the shawl of the Austrian ambassadress; stumbling in the cloak-room upon the already shawled and departing Milly Nesdale,—to whom he apologised without even perceiving at first who he was speaking to; maddening over the determined deafness with which she then ignored the announcement of her carriage, and waiting with her till it came round again and he could put her into it with a pacifying pressure of the hand;—after thus running the gauntlet through every stage of hindrance, he at length stood in the morning air; free to get away from the mingled sounds of linkmen hoarsely shouting outside, and the music of the cotillon playing within—and return to the silence of his bachelor home.

But Treherne did not go home. The phrase used by Lady Eudocia in speaking of Beatrice's declaration—"*in the very presence of Parkes*" —festered in his heart. He would see Parkes, and hear how Beatrice had behaved. He was

not afraid of the Marchioness's return; he knew that jewel-bearing peeress too well to expect her home while yet there remained any groups from the lessening crowd at Belvidere House to be dazzled by her sumptuosity. And if she did return, he cared not. Why had she made such mischief?

There was no difficulty in obtaining admittance, even at this hour. The expectant porter left his great black chair at the sound of wheels—even before Montagu's groom had given the light knock that surprised his ears, prepared as they were only for the magnificent thunder proper to the returning chariot. The alert Benson looked over the upper landing of the stairs where Beatrice had waited on the white floss rug; and pallid Miss Parkes started up, still attired in her morning dress, ready to perform all tasks the Marchioness might demand of her that were not "menial." She came meekly down when she heard Mr. Treherne wished to speak with her. She answered his interrogatories with

the simplest truth, and in a tone whose compassion never broke into emotion. She had seen too much sorrow, and had to "command her feelings" among strangers too long, to trouble him with any evidence in words or tears of her sympathy with Beatrice. Perhaps it was this very simplicity that affected Treherne. His heart smote him as he listened; a pain came over it, sore as the pain of an unhealed wound. It was *his* Beatrice who had been there; his own poor Beatrice, — not the frantic Beatrice of his ball-room dream,—whatever imprudence might be in the step she had taken!

He rose with a remorseful sigh; and not knowing exactly how to express what passed in his mind to Miss Parkes, he shook that timid little lady by the hand. And then, and then only, Parkes burst into tears.

He drove rapidly to Stratton Street, opened the street door, took the light from the hall table, and went quickly into the drawing-room;

straight to the table where the Venetian casket stood.

He read Beatrice's letter. He read it over and over again. Over and over again. Till at last it condensed itself into the single sentence, "I will never come again to the house I imagined was *my husband's*."

NEVER! His Beatrice — his loving, passionate, beautiful Beatrice; the very sunshine of whose eyes was a caress; who but the night before had bid him farewell, her head leaning on his shoulder, her eyes lifted to his with such petitioning sweetness!

"Never again." Do women keep such vows? Could she bear the blank days, after months of love, and joy, and eager meetings? Could *he* bear them? Supposing that Beatrice kept her despairing resolution,—could he, himself, bear the coming blank? Did he ever see her equal before? Should he ever again see anything to compare with her? In the ball-room he had just left,

was there one face or form that came within the twentieth degree of comparison with her beauty? What was he to do?

It should have seemed clear to Treherne what to do, but it did not.

He read the letter yet once more.

"Two months," she said, "two months alone stood between her and irrevocable shame. And she would never come again to the house she thought was *her husband's*."

Well?

How he had loved her! he had never known what love was, before he knew her. He could not give her up; it would make him too miserable. He *must* be loved by Beatrice Brooke. He *was* beloved: he knew it; but she would never come again. He would never be able to see Beatrice Brooke again, except by making her Beatrice TREHERNE!

Well?

He crushed the letter in both his hands, and leaned his head upon them—thinking; still think-

ing; debating that which should have been so clear —pitying himself.

He was so lost in the reverie that he did not even hear the drawing-room door open. Perhaps he had left it open, in his haste to see what sort of letter Beatrice had locked in the casket; at all events, he did not know anyone had entered, till his landlady's voice close to his ear—anxiously repeating his name—roused him with a start of amazement.

"Mr. Treherne, oh, sir! I am so thankful you are come in; and I do hope and trust you will think I have done for the best—sending for no one—and that you will get the young lady back to her friends quietly; and I am sure anything I can do ——"

"What is the matter? Is she here?"—and he looked round with great agitation.

"No, sir; oh, dear no. She is in the apartments on the ground floor; they 're always kept aired, ready for letting. I helped her down

myself, as soon as she was able, after her fainting fit; and I would have sent for a doctor, but she beseeched me not. She held my arm so tight by both hands (I 'm sure I 'd never have thought such delicate-looking hands could hold so tight as she held me), and she said, 'Send for no one. I confide in God's mercy, and in yours. On your life, send for no one!'—just so. 'I 'm not afraid of pain,' she said; 'I 'm not afraid of death, except that I should not like to die *here*.' Nor she wasn't afraid of pain; and she prayed—I'm sure it did one good to hear her pray! and she spoke very gentle and kind about you, sir, when she thought she was dying."

"Dying!"

"Yes—yes, sir; but she arn't dying—not a bit. She 's doing very well now; she 's fell off to sleep, and I came up here, for I heard you come in, only I couldn't leave her just then. But what *will* die before the day 's out, is the poor baby, sir. One can't indeed expect him to live, seeing he 's born long before he should be; nor perhaps no

one but the poor mother would wish him to live; and I'm sure it would have melted a heart of stone to see the face she had when I held him to her, and she kissed him and said, 'Oh, dear lamb! forgive your father—and me!' I'm sure, sir, when you come to think of it, you'll try and get her back to her friends. I couldn't get a word out of her who she belonged to, nor who she would have sent for. Nor she wouldn't have a doctor on no account. All she said was, 'Mr. Treherne will be here to-night or to-morrow—send for no one;' and once she laid her hand on mine and said, 'Many poor creatures in this great distress have no friend, nor a shelter over their heads, yet see how kind and motherly you —who are a stranger—have been to me.' And not a bit of victuals had she remembered to take all day; she owned as much to me, when I brought her a little gruel and a bit of toast. Oh, sir! I hope you'll get the poor young thing back to her friends, whosoever they may be, for I'm sure whoever's bad she's not bad, nor meant for

it; and if the poor babe should live (which it really can't, to my thinking), I 'm sure I 'd take care of it for nothing — that I would — till it was fit for schooling."

She might, if she pleased, have extended her monologue to even greater length. Treherne neither stopped her nor answered her. He remained master of but one idea. *It was no longer at his own option to save Beatrice.* The heir of his name that should have been—the heir of the Earls of Caërlaverock—was heir to nothing but shame; and his welcome to the world was, that even the kindly lodging-house keeper thought his speedy departure from it a thing that must naturally be desired by all — except by "the mother."

Treherne went down to the apartment where Beatrice lay. She was asleep, but woke at his entrance, noiseless though his step had been.

"Forgive me, and get well," he said. "You shall find my whole life devoted to making you amends."

"If it had pleased God that my poor babe had only been a girl?" said Beatrice, despondingly.

Treherne — father only one hour since—if the thoughts of human hearts could be analysed, there certainly was this wish in yours: — that your little son should DIE.

CHAPTER III.

THE WORLD'S JUDGMENTS.

LIKE the soft echo of a lovely sound, the clear sunlight of yesterday morning is repeated to-day in the cloudless sky; and the world is awake again and busy with all its good and evil deeds. Among its evil deeds are the night charges in the police-sheet, and Owen Brooke is brought up before the sitting magistrate, his jacket torn and his arm in a sling.

"Well, young gentleman, what have you to say to this most preposterous, this most criminal attempt of yours?"

Such was the address made to Owen after the account of his conduct had been fully gone into,

and the pebble-weighted letter had been duly read. The magistrate raised his spectacles and looked Owen in the face. "What is the meaning of it?"

"I intended no wrong, sir. I merely wished to convey a petition to the Queen."

"That is not the way to convey a petition to the Queen. You state yourself here to be a midshipman in the Royal Navy."

"I *am* a midshipman, on board the 'Enterprise,' war-steamer."

"Do you know how many midshipmen there are in the Royal Navy?"

Owen was silent.

"Do you suppose that Her Majesty is bound to read letters from all those young gentlemen? or from such of them as conceive themselves aggrieved? It is most ridiculous! What is the wrong you desired to complain of?"

"If I did not even state it in my letter, I am not likely to declare it here."

The magistrate took off his spectacles with

severe amazement, and put them on again as if he were putting on the judge's black cap.

"Have a care, young gentleman, don't address me in that manner. I sit here to administer justice, and I beg you'll answer all questions respectfully that I may see fit to put to you."

"I do not wish to be disrespectful, sir, but I decline to answer that one question."

"I see," said the magistrate, looking once more at the letter, "that you state yourself to be the son of Captain Gaveston Brooke; is that the Captain Brooke who was implicated in the bubble scheme of the Gwynfodd mining shares?"

The boy's lip quivered. "My father was one of the victims of that scheme."

"Humph! It is not very easy on these occasions to find out who are the victims and who are the victimised. Captain Brooke has lately gone through the insolvent court, I think?"

"He has. He gave up all his property to meet the demands upon him."

"Humph! I suppose your petition to Her

Majesty was connected with this business. I understand you sent to your father?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well—where is he? Why is he not here?"

"I do not know, sir."

Owen spoke the words with difficulty. A choking at his throat, a mist of tears—utterly unsuited to a brave young officer who had saved eight lives on the coast of Madagascar—came over him at the thought of his father. Where, indeed, was his father? What was happening at home? What had happened to Beatrice?

The wistful, proud, and yet boyish look, softened the formality of that Draco, "the sitting magistrate." He bent forward and laid the severe spectacles on his desk; but true to his habitual magisterial impressions, he said, "I hope it is not that you have been in so many scrapes before, that your father does not choose to assist you on the present occasion. Have you no other friend who will attend and answer for you?"

"Not in London, sir."

This also was said falteringly; for the question brought to Owen a group of frank kindly cheerful men and lads, officers on board his ship, who would all have given their right hand to help him, had they known he stood in need of help. His friends and messmates—gallant friends—with whom he had sped many a league over ocean foam in sunshine and storm! He stood silent.

"Well, if your father does not choose to appear, and you know no one——"

But the magistrate was interrupted,—courteously interrupted,—by a tall handsome old man, with but one arm; General Pryce Perry, —the same who was introduced to Beatrice at the Marchioness's ball, and whom Owen recognised, having seen him at his father's house the summer before. General Perry was at the police-office to give evidence about The Marchioness's coachman, who was accused of "whipping in" the night before. The old soldier had once been very much in love with Treherne's mother, Lady Jane, by whose family

he had been then most contemptuously repulsed; but was now permitted, in right of his disappointment and romantic adherence to her memory, to take all sorts of ill-requited trouble, and be at the beck and bend of her sisters, as a sort of Patito and useful family friend. If a safe lady's horse was wanted, or a beautiful little dog, General Perry looked about till the want was supplied. When the little dog wanted a new collar, General Perry saw that it was properly engraved. When, in spite of the new collar, or in consequence of the new collar, the little dog was duly stolen, General Perry advertised it, and called on the famous gunsmith who knew all the dog-stealers. He was always ready for the most trivial tasks and the most important services. To him the two ladies of fashion seemed neither so worldly nor so selfish as to others. They had a halo round their heads quite independent of their diamonds. They were HER sisters; the sisters of his dead lost love; for the sake of whose loss he went to the wars, whence

he came back with but one arm; for the sake of whose love he remained all his life long a bachelor.

And now the thing he loved best in the world was Helen Wollingham, for she was the one who resembled most that vanished delicate beauty; and Montagu Treherne, her son and living representative.

So General Perry was there (luckily for Owen) doing The Marchioness's bidding; and after it had been done, he took the midshipman away with him, patting the boy kindly on the shoulder, and bidding him think nothing of the magistrate's last words,—pronounced with stern dignity and a re-adjustment of the condemnatory spectacles; bidding the young sailor "take care when *next* he wore his arm in a sling, that it should be in the Queen's service like the worthy General, rather than in such senseless riotings."

They reached Spring Gardens just as Captain Brooke, accompanied by Maurice Lewellyn, was preparing to come to the police-office. Captain

Brooke thanked General Perry with emotion; and with a sadness which the General really thought went beyond what the occasion warranted. Mariana, too, looked the picture of fatigue and dejection. She was always pale, but she looked, now, like a statue upon a tomb.

The good-natured General lingered a little, with the intention of proposing an evening at Vauxhall to his midshipman friend, the fireworks at which, he thought, would be more exhilarating than these family countenances; but he did not know how Captain Brooke might take it, and was still hesitating as to his idea of subordination, when the latter said,—"My boy, your disagreeable night must, I am sorry to say, be followed by a very brief farewell to us all, for Captain Gordon, who is appointed to the 'Ajax,' desires you will join him at the Admiralty at three o'clock, and you are to accompany him out of town; you will scarcely have time for preparation, as it is."

"Well, well, perhaps that is the best thing for him; get him back to his ship; get him back to

his ship; if he goes on as well as he has done there, there is no fear of him."

So saying, General Perry shook all kindly by the hand,—and drove off to render an account of his services to the most noble the Marchioness of Updown.

Beatrice was not at home. She had not come home. She had been away all night; that, Owen learned at once! And his father had been away also, had been down to Dover by the night mail, to endeavour to see Sir Bertie Lewellyn before he started for the continent; whether the physician wished the interview or not. But Mr. Lewellyn, with the irritable impatience common to invalids, desired to cross at once instead of resting the night at Dover, and Captain Brooke found only Maurice, waiting the departure of the night mail to return to London. They returned together. Captain Brooke at first had held a certain reserve with the young man, and declared he had only come, "having business at Dover," to get a clearer opinion of the state of Beatrice's health than Sir

Bertie had had "courage" to give him; and Maurice heard him with silent sympathy, for he guessed something had occurred far more grievous, though his father had not revealed the result of his visit to Beatrice, nor had Maurice told either of his parents that he had seen her at Treherne's lodgings. Scarcely a word was exchanged during the three hours spent on the railway; but when, on arriving at his own home, Captain Brooke found that his daughter was still absent, and that Owen was in the hands of the police for the night, his agitation was too great for reserve; he turned wildly from the door, as if to seek her; then, as the dreadful WHERE? presented itself, he seized Maurice's hand and wrung it, exclaiming: "Your father had better have told me the worst; she said she was married; but we — *we don't even know where she is!*"

Maurice Lewellyn looked across him to the pale face of Mariana. "I think," he began; but he would not finish. He would not say he thought she might be at Treherne's house. He only said,

"I will return in half an hour if I can find any clue."

He was driven with all the speed of a double fare to Stratton Street. He rang in vain once or twice; the landlady heard, but could not leave the suffering Beatrice; a third time he rang, and the sleepy servant girl answered the summons and his questions. "Mr. Treherne was not there; he went into the country somewhere, in the early part of the day, and had not since been in."

If Maurice Lewellyn had waited in the clear summer dawn but ten minutes longer, he would have seen Treherne drive up to the door from the ball and the Marchioness's; but he was just ten minutes too early for that return. He thought now all was clear. They had eloped. Beatrice was there the evening before to give consent and make arrangements. Could they be married? Or were they gone to be married? The provisions of Lord Caërlaverock's will were not precisely known to the Lewellyns, who were always treated as if family matters were no affair

of theirs, and as if Lady Di had done something rather disgraceful; but he vaguely knew that Treherne was expected to marry one of the Wollinghams, and that certainly a marriage with penniless Beatrice Brooke would be to the last degree irritating to his relations. Therefore, Montagu might desire to make it "a runaway match."

Half grieved and half satisfied, he communicated the result of his knowledge to Captain Brooke. He begged him to be of good cheer, and said that his belief was that Beatrice had eloped with Treherne. Captain Brooke shook his head sadly. He knew all that Lewellyn had not heard. The physician's visit; the dreadful scene of yesterday; the condition of Beatrice; the assurance that she was *already* married; the promise that her husband should come the day before to claim her. He acceded, however, to Mariana's entreaty to "lie down and rest till daytime;" and Lewellyn promised to return and accompany him to the police-office.

He did return; and had to wait. Restless and wretched, Beatrice's father had gone, as early in

the morning as he could hope to find anyone up, to Mr. Grey's. The acute solicitor had already satisfied himself that Miss Brooke had never been with the Brettons, for Dr. Bretton had passed through London on his way home to Tenby, and on pretext of speaking about the farm in Tuscany which that gentleman had been so near purchasing, Mr. Grey incidentally discovered all that he wished to learn. Nor had Lady Eudocia failed, "in the interest of her girls," to communicate in writing to the family lawyer, on her return from the ball, the very disagreeable piece of news carried to that place of entertainment by the Marchioness — which intelligence, however partially salved over by Treherne's solemn oath, left her in a state of great anxiety, "as to the manœuvres of the young lady whom Mrs. Grey had, doubtless with the best intentions, so very imprudently taken abroad with her."

Provoked by the reproach; provoked by the news; provoked at the recollection of his wife's *câlineries* when to please Treherne she proposed to

him to invite the young stranger; conscious of his own rectitude; knowing his own interests at stake; thinking hardly of women, and above all of their insincerity, as exemplified in the only two women with whom his busy life permitted him to be very intimate, namely Mrs. Myra and Milly Nesdale,—and having, indeed, that general disposition to "believe the worst," usual in, and consequent upon, the exercise of the legal profession,—Lord Caërlaverock's solicitor was ill-disposed for sympathy, when the weary old officer asked to see him on business.

He bluntly told Captain Brooke, in reply to his first cautious question,—that "he had reason to believe there was some anxiety in both families as to Miss Brooke and Mr. Montagu Treherne," that, "without entering into particulars" there were reasons — family reasons — dependent on certain provisions in the late Lord's will, that made the idea of such a marriage impossible. That Mr. Treherne (with a ready frankness, for which he gave him every credit) had already—in

fact the preceding evening,—satisfied his relations by giving a *solemn declaration on oath that no such marriage had taken place*; and he hoped that all idea of it would be abandoned.

Something he added, courteously enough, to the downcast man before him, about the beauty of his daughter, and the certainty of her enjoying the attentions of many who might do him honour as son-in-law. And something he added about being a father himself, dependent on his professional exertions for the maintenance of his family; and the extreme hardship of "having his relations imperilled with one of his noblest clients and all the members of that distinguished family," by the imprudence or ambition of a young lady to whom he had unwittingly offered an opportunity of seeing Mr. Treherne at Venice, by permitting his wife to take temporary charge of her abroad.

Nothing that a gentleman might not say (Mr. Grey was always gentlemanlike), and nothing that had not a certain degree of fairness in it.

Nothing but what would still, perhaps (as far

as Mr. Grey was concerned), have had a certain degree of fairness in it, though with a very different aspect, had Captain Brooke known of the great "scena" with Lord Caërlaverock; the hasty relinquishment by Mrs. Myra of her temporary charge of Miss Brooke, in favour of the Gouglokoff; the lonely evening when they left Beatrice deserted in her hotel; the stormy voyage; the dreadful fever; the marriage, in what the poor girl believed to be the final hour of her life; implored and insisted upon, not then as the fulfilment of a passionate love-dream, but that he—her father—when he got the news of her death, should have no other sorrow to bear, linked with her name; no shame in her memory!

Captain Brooke knew none of these circumstances; nor Owen; nor Mariana. They were to have been told. They were what Beatrice relied upon for pardon. But where was Beatrice? Owen has joined his captain; Mariana is weeping at home; Captain Brooke knows only that his daughter had solemnly vowed she was married,

and that her supposed husband had solemnly sworn she is not. Where is she? where is his lost girl? Where is his Pet of The Home? She never named Treherne to her father. But he knows she must be with him; that he—only he—can be the lover she declared was her husband.

He goes to that fatal door in Stratton Street. But the landlady herself opens it now. She is on the watch; she has received Treherne's instructions. The medical man he has called in says Beatrice is on the verge of fever; the least agitation may kill her. She is not to be told what a weakly little atom her babe is, or that it is very unlikely to live out the day. Even Treherne is not to talk to her; the nurse is not to talk; only to watch. They are in a quiet back room, dark and silent.

Captain Brooke asks if "a young lady" has been there since yesterday? The landlady says, "No; she has only gentlemen lodgers." He tries again: he says, in a low voice, "I am the young lady's FATHER." There is a little agitated pause,

but she tells him it must be at some other house; there are *no* lady lodgers here. Captain Brooke asks for Mr. Treherne. He is not at home. Was he at home yesterday? No; he was not at home yesterday; he was at Putney all yesterday, and at the ball at Belvidere House till five this morning.

At Putney! At the ball! Can she be hidden at Putney? At the ball till five this morning! At the ball——with all this going on! Captain Brooke sighs, and turns from the door; he cannot understand it. Can Beatrice only have withdrawn from his anxiety and displeasure, till she can fulfil her pledge and prove her marriage? Is she *not* with Treherne after all?

A watch is set on Treherne's house, but no young lady is seen to go out or in; and Treherne goes no more to Putney. He goes to his balls and parties as usual.

An advertisement is put in that strange column of the "Times," where mystery and wickedness and anguish and petition jostle each other every day; it says: —

B.B. "Let one, very dear to her friends, trust those friends, and not remain among strangers. There was welcome for him who said 'I will arise and go unto my FATHER.' Her father waits for her day by day. Have no fear."

But no sign of life comes from Beatrice.

Captain Brooke looks very ill; and the term for which his London lodging is held, expires. Maurice Lewellyn urges him, with all earnestness of reasoning that he can, to go back, as he had settled, to Tenby; to The Home, with Mariana. The young lawyer promises to watch and inquire ceaselessly. He does not tell Captain Brooke what Helen Wollingham told him,—that she was sure some dreadful discussion took place about Beatrice at the ball: that she herself heard Treherne say: "Before God, and on the honour of a gentleman, I swear she is *not* my wife."

He does not tell Captain Brooke that his friendship has cost him dear; for that, on warmly and vehemently declaring that if Beatrice was compromised by Treherne, he ought to marry her

let what would be the circumstances, Lady Eudocia had gone into one of the fiercest passions he had ever seen: had told him she had no doubt he wished that, or any other ruin to Treherne, by which he could himself reap pecuniary profit under her grandfather's most ridiculous will. That, for her part, she should not wonder if his mother, her sister Dumpty, had plotted the whole to benefit her own son at the expense of Eudocia's daughters. (She was always backing up and encouraging that vain forward puss, Beatrice.) But that, since such *were* his plans and his sentiments, and he had now "let the cat out of the bag," she must beg him to keep away from her house and her betrayed children—though she thanked heaven *she* believed still that Montagu had a little too much sense to be made a dupe, tool, and cat's paw, for other people's advantage —and would prove it yet to their confusion!

All which was utterly unintelligible to him, except the fact that he was to see little more of those "betrayed children," the five golden-haired

disappointments. Little or nothing of that sweet Helen, who had stolen insensibly into his disappointed heart, filling it with hope and love! He was banished from his pleasant readings with her, and thrown once more on his lonely law-studies. But he nerved himself to endure it without regretting the words he had spoken for Beatrice. He would not regret them; even though in his secret soul he thought her frail,—remembering how he himself had met her that night at Treherne's, waiting for him. Evidently unexpected, —for Treherne had asked him to come in and smoke;—voluntarily, daringly there! Yet he would not swerve from his idea of honour; and if Treherne had betrayed this gentleman's daughter, most assuredly he thought he ought to marry her.

But Lady Eudocia stormed, and the Marchioness sneered contemptuously, at the very thought of such a marriage. And they rejoiced, with a huge rejoicing, when, the morning after Owen Brooke's baffled hope, his examination was reported

in the papers, with the magistrate's allusion to the "bubble scheme" of the Gwynfodd mines, and the insolvency of Captain Brooke. They twitted Maurice Lewellyn openly; and stung Treherne more carefully and privily, by remarks on the "horrid set the Brookes seemed altogether." The boy "being had up before the police" for insulting and flinging stones at Her Most Gracious Majesty only because Her Majesty could not prevent those who were employed in swindling transactions from going to prison; and the father joining a set of rogues,—men of straw and bankrupt adventurers, and then, forsooth, expecting to be pitied as a sort of martyr! As if a man, upwards of sixty, didn't know what he was about, allowing him to be ever so great an old simpleton. But it was one of the commonest tricks of cunning to try and take people in, and then, when it don't answer, to pretend to have been taken in yourself.

And the girl—God knows what had become of *her*, but a blessed thing it was that Montagu

had not been caught by her plotting and duplicity! A nice thing it would have been (setting aside all worldly considerations) to be connected with such people; a family, no one member of which could keep out of disgraceful scrapes. As to the boy, he would probably be cashiered the service, if his next prank was at all like the last—and his father had only himself to blame, for the way he brought them all up. Even that quiet one, his step-daughter, had a sort of independent way about her that was as unlike a girl as it could be. Very often those quiet ones were the worst; and, probably, if all were known, she was no better than her sister. Lady Eudocia could not sufficiently congratulate herself on having put a stop to the sentimental friendship between her Helen and that disreputable family; a friendship the poor child had, in fact, been lured into by her Aunt Dumpty, for purposes best known to herself.

And the world in general, reading the report of the "Extraordinary Case," and "Outrage on

Her Majesty," in the papers,—coupled with the fact that the royal party had been received with even more enthusiastic cheering than ordinary, in consequence of the report that the Queen had been fired at by some miscreant on her way to Belvidere House,—expressed themselves vehemently and wrathfully about "that scamp Brooke."

Kindly fathers of families laid down the morning paper with flushed faces, wishing it only depended on them to give Owen "a good hiding with the cat-o'-nine tails!" Tender matrons declared the boy ought to be hung at the lanyard, or topmast, or yard-arm, or wherever it was (they could not exactly remember), where criminal sailors were executed. And what with the story of the Gwynfodd mining shares, and the "Dangerous Missile," it was agreed that the Brookes must be altogether "a bad lot."

Not that the world in general had any particular spite to the Brookes, but that it is the universal practice of that corporate body "Society" to strain at a gnat when good is

recorded, and swallow a camel when there is any evil gossip afloat. People run each other down as though they could make pedestals of their neighbours' characters, and stand upon them. No inquiry is made into facts, no allowance for circumstances. In this world accusation is condemnation. Nothing is so fallible as human judgment, but nothing is so pitiless. It is the one black spot in our hearts (the devil's share in us), that the general impulse is to believe the worst. Mercy and peace are kissing each other in some more heavenly habitation, certainly not here. Here, the mass are for ever learning from their "dark master" how to tarnish, and where to sting; and truly he has reason to be proud of his scholars, even among nominally religious and self-righteous folk. There is nobody so abased that he is not tall enough to look down on others: doing unto his neighbour what he would particularly resent his neighbour doing unto him; and scorning his fellow-Christian "with all his heart and with all his mind, with all his soul and with all his strength."

Yet we know who is the master and teacher of scorn :—

> Scorn is of DEVILS! Meek compassion lies
> In Angel words, and beams from Angel eyes.

And angels have been God's messengers from all time.

They are not His messengers who go to church (strict Sabbatarians!) and patter out loud litanies to the "Author of Peace and Lover of Concord" to "deliver them from pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy,—from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,—to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and to raise up them that fall,"—and who then return home to sit in judgment on their neighbours. Yearning for power to punish other men's sons; slandering and sneering at other men's daughters; and fiercely condemning the Beatrices whose true history is to them a sealed book.

Who art thou that judgest another? To his own master he standeth or falleth.

CHAPTER IV.

TREHERNE JUSTIFIES HIMSELF.

BEATRICE had what is called, in old nurses' parlance, "a dreadful bad recovery." If her babe had died, she probably would not have recovered at all; for her whole soul seemed wrapt up in that fragile existence. But it lived on, contrary to expectation, with a weakly lingering sort of life. It was a sickly-looking atom, with pretty features, thin limbs, and large, sad, wandering eyes; but Beatrice thought it the most lovely of created beings, and clung to it with a cherishing tenderness. Even her first desponding misery about it, the fact of her son being born after the fearful revelation that Treherne and she were not "man

and wife," was relieved by the ingenious falsehood of her companion. Two great cheerful lies he told her, with many a fond and pitiful caress. Lie the first,—that he considered they were as much married in the sight of Heaven, although the person who read the words was not in orders, as though a Bishop had consecrated the ceremony; although it was not the sort of legal marriage that would have justified his declaring it!

Lie the second,—that as soon as he was legally of age, and master of his own destiny, a public marriage would not only justify her, but, as a matter of course, legitimate their son; that there were hundreds of instances of secret marriages, and marriages that legitimated offspring, all over the world; and that a little patience, a little hope, a little trust, were alone necessary to make life bright again, after all the agitation and misery *they* had endured.

They—for Treherne would not admit that he had suffered less than Beatrice in the matter. He drew such an exaggerated and frantic picture of

his own despair, when he opened the Venetian casket and found she "renounced him" (as he termed it), unless he immediately claimed her as his wife:—of the loneliness in which he and she would both have remained during the two years of "widowhood and seclusion" she was to pass with her father, and he in pining constancy away from her:—of the torment the secret had been to him, so nearly revealed when she comforted his dejection when leaving Trieste:—of the fierce opposition of his guardians and his family to his dream of happiness.

He admitted so frankly that it would have been nobler, better, wiser, to have waited his coming of age, betrothed and trusting, instead of making that hurried elopement with her from Venice, —and appealed so irresistibly to her memory of that time; of the notification of his grandfather's will coming upon him "like a clap of thunder" just when he had expected the very sight of her would persuade his uncle to consent to their marriage; of the fear he had, that

once parted they would be parted for ever; and of the various "unfortunate incidents" which had embarrassed him; making, as he expressed it, "quite a web of his destiny:"—he drew such a vivid picture of her present position in consequence of "the most unfortunate incident of all," her illness and non-return to her father's house the night of the ball at Belvidere House:—he so often and so vehemently repeated that if he could have foreseen what his rash elopement at Venice would have led to, he would rather have drowned himself by the Lido, than have persuaded her to enter the gondola:—and he so mixed all these vehement asseverations with the avowal that regret was of no use, since *now* things could not be otherwise, and if he were to shoot himself it would not mend matters,—that he left on Beatrice's mind rather the impression that they were both victims of evil chances, than that she had been just in reproaching him.

And if my readers think it positively ridiculous to suppose that an educated girl of seventeen

would either have believed herself married by the simple ceremony of a clergyman reading the service without witnesses when she was apparently in *articulo mortis*, or,—that ceremony failing,—that her son could be legitimatised by her after-marriage; let them ascertain what the ideas of law on these simple points may be, among very young ladies brought up in retirement, in this country where Gretna Green has only just ceased to be a Hymeneal temple,—in this country, the only one in Europe, I believe, where the innocent suffer for the guilty, and an after-marriage does *not* redeem the destiny of the children.

Ridiculous or not, it is certain that Treherne's attempt

> To make the worse appear the better reason,

succeeded to his heart's content; and that Heaven never crowned the labours of the most self-denying missionary with more satisfactory results as far as the intention of the preacher was con-

cerned. Beatrice seemed to accept her position. She did not distrust him. She did not worry him. If she grieved heavily about her father, she did not weep when Treherne was by. Indeed, he could not bear weeping; and it was with a shade of impatience that he begged her, on the last occasion she gave way to tears in his presence, to consider how very many marriages every day took place, which even for worldly motives divided families, and were afterwards forgiven.

For some time she hoped her father would write, however angrily; but that happened in this case which happens in many of these sad occasions. Each thought the other voluntarily silent. While Beatrice was hovering between life and death, the unhappy Captain Brooke believed her contumaciously determined not to reveal her place of abode. He did not imagine her to be in Treherne's house. That house had been watched without result. A faint hope that her story of the secret marriage was true, and that the difficulties, whatever they were, which Mr. Grey had

alluded to, had induced Montagu to give some sort of denial which the family had exaggerated to the lawyer—combated in his heart the deadly fear of her disgrace; but in either case she was voluntarily absent—voluntarily silent!

Beatrice, on her part, remembering the painful evening which preceded her departure from home—the dreadful expression of her father's face before she fell at his feet with the plaintive assurance that she was married—the certainty he must have felt that it could only be to Treherne, and that he had only to communicate with her by sending to Stratton Street—considered herself renounced and cast off.

This impression was increased by a letter of farewell from Owen, which the landlady of the house had given her as soon as she seemed strong enough; and which she said a young gentleman had left with her the very morning after she came, and though she told the young gentleman there was no lady there, he persisted in leaving it, saying it was for the lady who was there the day

before, and she would be there again, he thought, and that he would trust the chance. There was no address on it, but "To my Sister:" the letter itself was full of boyish love and boyish hope.

"My own darling and beloved Sister,—Your tears that were wet on my cheek seem to me still there; and I shall not kiss you again, dear girl, for I was most unexpectedly prevented from coming back to you last night, and now I am ordered off at an hour's notice, and am going to join my captain by appointment at the Admiralty. May God bless you, and keep you safe till I return. I shall try to trust, as you do. If I have wronged the man you love, glad I shall be to clasp his hand as a brother, and ask him to forgive me for your sake, when we meet again. I wish my poor father would think so too. I wanted to talk about it with him, but he covered his eyes with his hand and said, "*Don't speak of Beatrice!*"

"But if, my dear, I don't wrong anyone (and

that, I tell you, I try not to think), if you become unhappy—more unhappy—don't forget you have a brother that loves you better than life. I am but a boy now, and little comfort or protection, I know; but the day shall come when I *will* protect you. Yes, my dear girl, the day shall come when I will be brave and celebrated like my granduncle and grandfather. Then you shall live with me. What had Nelson, or Raleigh, or any other hero, more (to begin with) than a fearless heart and a wish to do his duty? and I have both.

"When I have a ship of my own, you shall be with me: far away from sorrow and care. You little know what a triumphant sensation it is to ride the ocean in one of Her Majesty's ships of war: to see the order and discipline—to see the gallant fellows, the 'hearts of oak' that man her. It makes one feel as if one could conquer the world! Yes, you shall be with me, and never bow your head in sorrow or shame; for I, your brother, will protect you. I shall never marry, or

if I do, I shall never love anyone better than my own sister; do not think it. And I shall always be proud of you, my dear, remember that. *I* never, never can feel ashamed, even if the world holds a bad sorrow to come, for us both. And so, farewell; and God preserve, cherish, and bless you now and always. Amen. And many a day out on the lonely sea, where I can't have news of you, and many a night in the midnight watch, I shall lift my eyes to Heaven and repeat the prayer. And you, dear, write to me 'H.M.S. Ajax, Valparaiso, or elsewhere;'—and tell me all that happens, whether good or bad. And don't grieve, —for my sake!

"Your truly loving and affectionate

"BROTHER.

"P.S.—I write badly, being in such haste."

"Dear Owen!" Beatrice murmured, as she kissed the letter, with tearful eyes; "dear, dear Owen! how kindly he writes!"

Ay, Beatrice! more kindly even than you know. Striving to cheer and seem cheered, with his heart wrung and wounded; writing badly, not because "in such haste," but because his sprained arm was nearly helpless; telling you nothing of that police adventure; telling you nothing of his dread that shame may be your portion; telling you nothing but what he means for comfort; though, going down to Portsmouth and on board his ship, he looks back with a groan to the spot where he leaped so lightly ashore for his brief home holiday.

But Owen has admitted that her father said—"*Don't speak of Beatrice!*" That is the sentence that haunts her.

CHAPTER V.

MILLY NESDALE.

"DON'T speak of Beatrice." Yet Beatrice longed to hear of them all: to know where and how they were. Her anxiety of mind retarded her recovery, and it was the middle of August before she was even able to be lifted into an open carriage to take a drive.

Often she had longed to ask the kindly landlady to inquire about her father, but that was at once to reveal who she was, and fix the great scandal on his name. Treherne had told her he believed they had left London, but she could not rest satisfied in uncertainty; and one of the first days she was able to go out, the carriage drew up at

the Duke of York's statue, and a ragged little lad who was loitering about was beckoned to, and despatched on a furtive message to Spring Gardens, to know if Captain Brooke was still in town, and how he was. The lad speedily returned, "The old gentleman was gone away for good, and there was the direction, if so be any letters were written to him." Beatrice looked at the well-known address—"Captain Gaveston Brooke, The Home, Tenby, South Wales," and a heavy sigh escaped her. They had gone, without once noticing her existence!

That very evening a letter was written to Captain Brooke by Maurice Lewellyn. He said he had at last seen Beatrice, as he was crossing from Carlton Gardens to the Athenæum; that she looked pale, was in a well-appointed carriage, and accompanied by an elderly female and an infant. He said nothing more.

The next morning Treherne told Beatrice that he thought of going to shoot in the Highlands; that he had never in all his life been so late in

London, but that he "had made the sacrifice" because he could not bear to leave her; and now, he would like to take her with him. The difficulty was the infant; would she leave that with the nurse somewhere by the sea-side for two or three months?

What anxious startled eyes Beatrice lifted to his face at this question! No; she could not leave her baby—her delicate fragile baby. She knew it would die, if she left it.

With an impatient sigh, Treherne yielded the point; merely warning Beatrice that the nurse and babe must rejoin her somewhere, for it was utterly impossible they could travel with him.

"But they need not be in the carriage with us?" said Beatrice, pleadingly.

Treherne shook his head. "They shall rejoin you," he said; and leaving her absorbed in a dreamy contemplation of the large sad eyes of the babe as it lay on her knee, he went to refresh his spirits by calling on Lady Nesdale.

For during the last two months and more,

during which Beatrice had been weakly recovering in her dull room; forbidden to talk much, or read much, or sit up, or have the windows opened in the chill of the evening, or the wax lights too near her eyes at night — condemned to lead the life of a hot-house flower; Treherne had resumed what had been the constant habit of *his* life,—till his sudden passion for Beatrice broke through it,—namely, visiting daily at the house of Milly Nesdale.

Even when Beatrice was in perfect health and spirits,—enamoured as he was of her beauty, enchanted with her singing, amused by her playfulness, greedy of her love,—there was something wanting in the companionship between them which Milly had, and Beatrice had not. Beatrice was a thousand times more charming, but somehow less suitable. She knew nobody; had not an idea who anyone was, or who was spoken of. She had never heard politics talked in her life: the prime minister and home secretary might have been king of clubs and knave of diamonds

for any distinct notion she possessed of their existence as men. All the subjects, places, things, and people, connected with Treherne's daily life, and possessing continual and hourly interest for him, were blanks to her. "The debate of the night before" might have been a Sibyl's leaf for anything she understood of it. The tracasseries and scandal which form the larger portion of the conversation of the fashionable world, were to her, an unrevealed store of chattering.

What Lady A. had said to Lord B. about the beautiful but imprudent Mrs. C.; what chance there was of a separation between P. and Q.; how the old Marquis of G. had behaved in that business; whether J. was in love with L.; or what the real facts were, respecting "that shocking story you know, my dear,"—was all like the sound of the idle wind, "which roameth where it listeth," to Beatrice. Full of quickness, of earnestness, of pliability, you might have made her understand the world and its doings, its politics and its scandal, in

a month; but meanwhile she was innocent of any such knowledge. You may build a saw-mill in a fair meadow watered by a pleasant stream, fill it with intricate machinery, and set that to grind, and whirl, and chip, and divide, and plane, till those who knew it formerly stand agape at the change; but till you have done so, it remains only a fair meadow; with the fresh stream running its own free course, the sweet cowslips springing in the grass, the blue meadow butterflies flitting over them, and "all its capabilities unimproved."

Beatrice had great "capabilities." She was a good historian, a good musician, a good arithmetician, a fair poet, a good linguist, a ready acquirer of all that could be taught; but she was not a woman of the world—nor even a girl of the world. I doubt whether Milly Nesdale did not know more of the world's doings, its gossipings, its pursuits, and its vices, at eleven years old, than ignorant Beatrice at this hour.

Now Treherne was essentially a man of the

world. He had no other existence than that which merges in clubs, ball-rooms, parties, and politics. Politics, not as a severe study of different social systems, but as a matter of House of Commons attendance, and voting, and the rivalry of particular leaders. And Milly Nesdalé was a twin soul with him in these things.

And in another most material point she was a twin soul. Montagu Treherne had no religion. The landlady had said that it did one good to hear Beatrice pray. Not only it inspired him with no sympathy, but at the bottom of his heart he thought "the whole thing absurd." Now Milly Nesdale, the half-bred Hindoo niece of the wily Myra, also thought "the whole thing absurd." She believed in the Lord Jehovah about as much as in the God Vishnu. She had no "superstitions" or "prejudices." She was not even like the hero of one of Edmund About's graceful novels, of whom it is said that though he did not believe in God, *he believed in Fridays*; in luck, and spells, and all

those follies which the eloquent Abbé Dupanloup declared God permits to influence the minds of the most heathenish and sceptical, to show how necessary *some* belief is to the human heart.

Milly believed in nothing except in herself, and most profound was her self-adoration. She devoutly believed she was the most charming of human beings; she was convinced that she inspired the most unconquerable attachments, and that all other preferences or rivalries were mere "entanglements." She was saved from much jealousy, partly by this pleasant conviction, and partly by not caring for the man so much as for the visible and apparent conquest. She was little tempted, and very shrewd. Unlike her aunt Myra, she had always kept on the vantage side. Never loving, she had always the power to lead or to govern the men who became enamoured of her. In general, she succeeded in evading any very vehement claims on her regard, but where, as in the case of Treherne, and one or two others, a suitor resolved "not to be trifled with," she

bought her conquest with her sin instead of her coquetry, as she would have given a hundred guineas for a shawl she could not buy for thirty.

She conducted these various intrigues with the most audacious courage, and the most matchless cunning. Like most persons of eastern extraction, she had a positive pleasure in deceiving. Her motto was the motto of famous old Harry Vaughan, "Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit vivere." The greater the need of stratagem, the greater the amusement; and it was quite a waste of Milly's abilities that she had such an affectionate trustful husband, for she would have braved the most fiery, and outwitted the most watchful.

Up to the time of Nesdale's father's death, Milly Nesdale had "no carriage." She would not have had a carriage for the world. If she wanted a drive, or to go to her parties, the handsomest equipages rolled to the door, and all gauze and feathers or all furs and velvet, according to the season, poverty-stricken Milly stept lightly in. When she wanted, on the contrary, to

go out unobserved, then happy for Milly was the "no carriage" system. She went, as she herself laughingly expressed it, "hithering and thithering;" she "rested in a shop," she "got into a cab," and she managed matters so well (especially when she went out with aunt Myra), that no one could have told what became of Milly from one day's end to another.

And how "the world" loved Milly!

She had the prettiest way of saying "she could not afford" things, folding the palms of her slender Hindoo hands over each other, as if clasping the emptiness of fortune. Flowers in her drawing-room window and balcony were things Milly "could not afford," neither could she "afford" a box at the play or the opera. Yet somehow or other she had more flowers and opera-boxes at her disposal than any one, except the Marchioness of Updown. Even now that Nesdale had succeeded to the title, she got all she could from everyone, not from necessity, but from habit, and because the predatory soul of the adventuress was

in her, as in her aunt Myra, and no change of position would have extracted it out of either of them.

She was not accomplished. She rather scorned what are termed accomplishments, but she talked well on a variety of subjects, she "read up" in all reviews and papers with sedulous industry for the topics of the day; and she had that puzzling superficial scholarship common to almost all women who have been educated by men, or lived very much more amongst men than women. The conversation of such women is composed of a series of imperfect echoes from true and perfect sounds.

With all this, Milly had, as her friends and admirers expressed it, "something very taking in her," and certainly there was in her a very resolute determination *to take*. She had an Eastern prettiness too, though not a regular beauty like aunt Myra, and no longer in the bloom of youth. She was strange and foreign-looking; on entering a crowded room, you remarked her more than

you might remark far more beautiful women. She was also very graceful. Her body was as lithe as the liana, and her soul was the soul of a snake. Rampant, watchful, cautious, till a safe noiseless spring and a sudden coil gave her her prey.

Treherne was one of her great triumphs. She had carried him off from a lovely Russian Countess, younger sister of the very Gouglokoff who had married old Lord Caërlaverock. Milly had treated Montagu with very careless coquetry up to the time that this bewitching foreigner arrived in England; professing not to admire him the least, "poor lad," and saying of him (what perhaps she thought) that he was "selfish and inane." But no sooner did she perceive, with amazement, that her conquest was comfortably transferring himself to the more easy toils of the pink-complexioned beauty of St. Petersburg, than her soul wound itself into a very corkscrew of spiral coils, preparatory to the final spring.

She came off victorious. In vain was the Russian pinker, whiter, prettier, than even other Russians of her fair complexion; in vain had she her due and liberal portion of Russian craftiness; in vain was she really "in love" with the handsome young Englishman who had singled her out as an object of attention, while Milly was only jealous and provoked. Somehow or other, "hey! pass!"—with the Hindoo juggler's dexterity when he swallows a sword and smiles,—the serpentine Milly repossessed herself of the escaping heart, and left the poor little pink and white huntress to pursue any other game that might offer itself as a substitute for her vanished adorer.

Only Milly had so far to pay forfeit, that it was agreed by a little arrangement between the contracting parties, that Treherne was "no longer to be trifled with."

And then followed really a delightful time for Milly; calling forth all her powers of dissimulation, and all her spirit of intrigue; for the Russian

ambassador, who had depended on the pink and white huntress for information as to English political secrets, or half-secrets, which he thought so young a diplomat as Treherne was very likely to communicate without even thinking of their being betrayed; took it extremely ill that Milly should undo the links whose riveting he had been watching with some interest; while Nesdale's ministerial uncles, having conceived very nearly the same expectations (poor simple gentlemen) as to the chances of the pink and white woman conversing during the lull and pause of more amatory discourse respecting the schemes of the great Czar, and the treatment of "the Sick Man," whereby Treherne might not only become enlightened himself, but the cause of enlightenment to others, equally resented the *revêche* conduct of their niece-in-law, who, with all the London "world before her, where to choose," went out of her way to disturb and terminate a flirtation so extremely apropos in the then state of political affairs.

Therefore Milly was, as she sighingly expressed it, "persecuted." She told Treherne (for she never loved till then, poor Milly had not) that she "had no idea what a sorrowful trouble *real* love was," and that she felt "so jealous and restless with all the world against poor little me,"—that she made him send perpetual excuses to the Russian ambassador, and to the ministerial uncles-in-law, whenever the pink and white woman was to dine with them; or she made him accept the invitations, and then fail at the last minute from one cause or another. Sometimes "he dar'n't leave the House, a division being expected;" sometimes "he was extremely indisposed;" sometimes "he had mistaken the day, and made ten thousand apologies;" and sometimes he came so very late that he lost his natural place, and congregated with the gentlemen at the end of the table, where ladies were not, or at least not such chrysolites as the fair Russian, and then he slipped away just as coffee was brought upstairs, so that he might as well not have come at all.

Till at last the Russian ambassador (being of a superior and Russian wiliness) took to asking Milly and Treherne as before, and the pink woman also; and if by chance they all met, he was especially urbane, and called them "*mes enfans*," and told stories, like Lord Caërlaverock, (only with more point in them); and paid great court to Milly, who was exceedingly flattered, and said the Russian ambassador was a man "of great intellectual capacity."

But the ministerial uncles (being of an inferior and English wiliness) set their wits against Milly's wits; and even went so far as to tell Nesdale (for the honour of the family) that her conduct was "*plus que coquette*," and he really ought to go out with her, and make her more circumspect, especially with regard to that conceited young man, Lord Caërlaverock's nephew!

Whereupon Milly went up in glad balloons of inventive daring, and came down in parachûtes of the same; making so many contrivances for

meeting Treherne when and where she pleased, that Ariadne's clue was a joke to it. She "went out shopping," and passed in at one shop entrance and out at the other, Heaven knows where. She had "appointed to lunch with her cousin," or "sit with a sick friend," and ready aunt Myra took her away and set her down at those doors. She went to study art at picture-exhibitions; where she looked at one picture, and then vanished. She took her poor children out, and left them sitting under a shady tree with the little French *bonne*, "till mamma came back." She went to country balls, and took rooms in the hotel "because it was so far to drive home:" or she went "quietly down into the country for a couple of days," and then walked forth to contemplate tombs in a neighbouring churchyard, till the whistle of the railway engine told her that she need not wait many more minutes without seeing Montagu appear. She attended that political pretence, the "Ladies' Gallery" in the House of Commons, and laughed

through the *grille* at her grave husband as he sat dangling some local bill, before she folded her lace mantilla closer round her and skipped away with her lover. And seeing something wistful in the eyeing of the outside of her notes and letters by the perplexed Nesdale (disturbed by his uncles' warnings), she took to corresponding in cipher in the "Times." For who was to tell that 53: 2: 1: 8 meant that she referred Treherne to the fifty-third page, second line, of a book of which they kept duplicate copies, for the settling of their next project? or that a grave unintelligible sentence apparently alluding to money affairs, was a note of warning as to Nesdale's absence, or a direction where to find a letter? And one of the pleasantest and most amusing incidents Milly could remember during this active period of slyness, occurred one morning when, anxious to hear what had been settled as early as possible, she said to her husband across the breakfast table—"Give me at least the advertisement sheet, you absorbed reader!" and he, stretching out his arm without

ever looking off the leading article he was perusing, handed her the paper with his thumb exactly on Treherne's advertisement, as if he had desired to point it out to her.

And all this time it never occurred to Treherne that she, who was so cunning to others, was also cunning to him; though on that special occasion her anxiety was to know whether his appointment was to be kept—or *another*.

Nor was the interference of the ministerial uncles of the smallest use. Checkmate to uncles, checkmate to husband, checkmate to the pink and white woman. The only result was, that for some time afterwards, Nesdale called her "poor dear Milly," in speaking of her to his uncles, as of an injured victim; and though he hated aunt Myra and knew that aunt Myra hated him, and laughed at him, and told everybody what a pity it was that her charming niece should be thrown away upon him, he interfered even less than formerly with their drivings and suppings, from a vague sense of having wronged Milly by

having allowed his uncles to speak disparagingly of her.

And so Milly passed once more from the state of active slyness, to the state of passive slyness (which was infinitely less entertaining to her); and she did exactly as she pleased; and made a little saucy smile at the uncles when she passed them in society leaning on Treherne's arm. And the world in general delighted in Milly, and always asked her to meet Treherne; and so did every member of his family; though they would have tied Beatrice up in a sack and drowned her, were such a Bosphorus proceeding possible on the borders of the civilised Thames.

For there is a little society in a corner called "The Society for the Suppression of Vice;" but there is a much larger society for its Protection: and in that larger society Right and Wrong do not signify,—but Success, or Non-Success.

Indescribably welcome therein, are women like Milly, with shallow feelings and deep designs,—who tread the paths of sin sure-footed as Spanish

mules on the edge of the Cordilleras: and utterly abhorred are the stupid honest Beatrices; with their passionate affections, and blind confidence in the base, and romantic notions of love and justice and universal sympathy.

Not to do anything "imprudent," and not to be found out if you *have* done anything imprudent, is the Alpha and Omega of their Catechism.

CHAPTER VI.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

So Treherne called on Lady Nesdale; and spent a remarkably pleasant couple of hours; and patted Nesdale's little boy on the head, as though he were the kindest friend his father had; and sent him riding round the drawing-room on his cane while he lounged in a chair listening to Milly's autumnal plans, and settling a little where they would go; for they were both invited to the same country-houses in two or three instances.

And a little later Milly had some entertaining calls, from such persons as still lingered in London. The Russian ambassador called; and the Austrian and French ambassadresses; and

one or two other ladies, and several spruce and agreeable attachés and secretaries; and General Perry, with a good deal of news from "the seat of war;" and the Marchioness of Updown, —" passing through London on her way to Windsor Castle"—as she took care to repeat each time a fresh visitor entered; and the author of the last political pamphlet, with a very stern-browed and clever-looking American friend, whom he desired to introduce; and one of the baffled ministerial uncles, who was very pleasant, too, in his way. And there was much lively chat, and brilliant discussion, and grave sentences and laughing sentences. And the Austrian ambassadress spoke the prettiest English in the world, and the French ambassadress had on the prettiest bonnet; and the gentlemen, young and old, were all extremely flattering and conversable; and Treherne felt himself *très égayé* in consequence, as he assured a bright-eyed and laughing girl who rose with her mother to take leave.

And now Milly's circle thinned again; and after

all the ladies had departed, and the principal notabilities among the gentlemen, and only a few lingering minnows of good society were left swimming in that crystal pond,— Milly dismissed the unimportant remnant of do-nothings, by rising with a bewitching little half-yawn, and the exclamation, "What a fatigue! I have had quite a levée, et Dieu! quelle chaleur étouffante! Now I must really go to get a little fresh air. Bon jour, messieurs! bon jour, mes amis! Good-bye, Mr. Treherne;"—and with an English shake of the hands to Treherne, and little adapted bows and smiles thrown among the rest as a good housewife throws grain among the chickens, and repeated here and there with emphasis as some especially gentlemanlike attaché took his hat, clicked his heels together, and bowed himself out of the apartment—the conqueror of pink and white Russians was left alone.

Several of the do-nothing remnant went to loiter in the park, with a vague hope of again seeing the *charmante* Lady Nesdale, for town and

the chancelleries were getting extremely dull. But Milly was too busy to drive in the park; she was going shopping (really going shopping, this time); she had her pretty little Balmoral boots to get; and hats of various forms, with various feathers; and a waterproof cloak, and other odds and ends, which had been left to the last, after all her morning dresses and evening dresses had been tried on and completed and packed away for her autumn "progress." And she did all her shopping very successfully, her spirits being "light and nimble," having had a very pleasant triumphant afternoon, and ascertained Treherne's plans, which somehow or other he had fidgeted her by seeming chary hitherto of settling or revealing; and he had remained so *very* late in town; but that might be for policy, so much was doing and fermenting among ministerial folk.

And Beatrice, too, made her simple preparations for departure, with many a downy covering for "baby," and many an adjuration to his nurse, and feeling as if the separation from him for a

day or two was quite a dark gulf of time. Till Treherne came home, gay and animated, looking forward with great satisfaction to getting "at last" out of hot empty London; and having so exactly ascertained Milly's movements, that he was able at once to settle how to avail himself of her lively and amusing companionship at the houses to which he would have gone at any rate during the shooting season, and how to avoid travelling by the same route or on the same day to Scotland,—Beatrice being his companion.

So when Milly, and her boots, and hats, and dresses, and cloaks, arrived on the Wednesday at King's Cross Station for the Great Northern, no Treherne was visible; though she did not step into the carriage till the last moment, expecting, as he knew her day of departure, that he would appear as usual "quite accidentally" with a new book and paper-knife in his hand: and she felt the more provoked, as she had needlessly deprived herself of legitimate attendance, by advising Nesdale "instead of hurrying with

accounts and other little matters put off till the last, to come on by the night mail."

All which being known by experience to Treherne, he gave Milly two days' start; and taking an entire compartment for himself and Beatrice in a Carlisle carriage on the Caledonian line, went on the day afterwards to Edinburgh; knowing Milly by that time past Dunkeld on her tour of visits.

At Edinburgh he loitered a couple of days more; amused by the enthusiasm and admiration expressed by his companion for that most picturesque of cities; by her eager way of talking of the personages of history as if they were all her intimate personal acquaintance; by her fervent compassion for Mary Queen of Scots, which made her look with moistened eyes on the sunny walls of ruined Craigmillar.

Nay, he was glad, "though all this really played the deuce with his shooting," to have consented to "waste another afternoon" in the lovely dell of Hawthornden, at Beatrice's earnest

petition, because Drummond of Hawthornden's works were among aunt Dumpty's curious old books, and because they had read him together in those happy days at Tenby. Had Shakspeare ever sat with his friend in that wild scenery, Beatrice wondered? Who knows? Who shall say where he sat and dreamt—that least known of all celebrated men!

Beatrice sat there, at all events, reciting many a scrap of poetry, and legendary lore. There she was in her element; there no Milly could rival her; and although to Treherne these things were indifferent, she who spoke of them was the present passion of his sensual heart, and he treated her that day with an enamoured tenderness which would have made aunt Myra's niece stand aghast with wonder, if she could have witnessed it.

And seeing how fond Beatrice was of poetry and romantic scenery, Treherne concluded that the best home for her, with due regard to his own convenience during the shooting season, was the inn at Inversnaid on Loch Lomond.

Well he knew that inn; and the fair lake with its thirty islands, and Craigroyston's rough shelter. Well he knew the neighbouring Loch Katrine, and lesser Ard, and the tiny lake of Menteith. Thither he had brought the "first love" of his selfish manhood,—one Mary Macvicar, daughter to Lord Caërlaverock's steward, now a struggling milliner in London. There he had met Mrs. Hammond, a Maltese merchant's wife, whose beauty he remembered even when with Beatrice, —though he had rather drawn off from that acquaintance, for he thought Mrs. Hammond was "trifling with him." And above all, there he had been with Milly Nesdale, sometimes with a "distinguished party" of ladies and gentlemen; sometimes by stealth, with cunning delays of a day, or a day and a half, or half a day,—when her easy husband thought her passed on to her next country-house visit, or settling the dear children to bathe on the Clyde.

Here, indeed, he first saw Milly; and was flattered by aunt Myra (through whom he made her

acquaintance), assuring him that he would "suit her so well as a companion," and that she was "so thrown away upon Nesdale." Vividly he recollected one day at Menteith; when,—having rowed across to the little island of Talla, and emerging arm in arm with Milly from the ruins there,—he suddenly and unexpectedly met Maurice Lewellyn (seemingly fated to meet him with his loves), and was struck by the grave contempt of Lewellyn's bow to his companion.

How nervous he had felt for her; and how she had laughed at him, and hung on his arm, and looked up in his face, quoting from Lillie's Euphues:—"He that cannot dissemble in love, is not worthy to live. *I* am of this mind; that both might and malice, deceit and treachery, perjury and impiety, may lawfully be committed in love, which is lawless." And how, as they rowed to chestnut-shadowed Inchmahome, and the wily Hindoo smile still lingered on Milly's features, it seemed to him that he

had sold his soul to a species of charming water-witch, rather than given his heart to a woman.

No scenery could be monotonous that was visited with such a variety of company; and while Treherne was taking his western shooting, he left Beatrice at Inversnaid; and when he paid more eastern visits, he moved her to Dunkeld; and he very fairly divided his time between enamoured visits to this Rosamond, and a sedulous attention to grouse shooting and Milly Nesdale.

The autumn passed off charmingly for all parties. Beatrice, though she had fits of excessive dejection about her father, and his silent renunciation of her—though she was for ever notching off days from the two years, like a poor prisoner, by staring for the hundredth time at the date of Montagu's birthday in her pocket-book,—yet for the most part held a sweet and cheerful humour with Treherne.

She adored her baby; recovered her health; bloomed once more with the English colour whose

loss had made her so like her Italian mother; sang once more with the rich clear voice whose sound Treherne, who was fond of music, had exceedingly missed; and never asked a fraction more than he pleased to tell her, of how he employed his time, or who he saw; nor moaned and worried, beyond now and then saying, with a smile and a sigh, "Well! in two summers more, I suppose I shall see some of these people *with* you!"

Milly Nesdale was likewise perfectly satisfied. She had spent her time entirely to her own liking, and been extremely fêtéd and admired at all her visits. She had given what a quaint old chronicler calls "the privy nip, or open flout," to every woman who presumed to interfere with, or attempt to rival her. She had triumphed in observing that the most beautiful girls, attended by the most skilful chaperons, appeared no more to inspire Treherne with the idea of marrying, than if he had taken the vow of celibacy as a Knight of Malta; and instead of wandering away to Tenby and Venice, and Heaven knows where, as

during the last two autumns, he had spent his time as a gentleman should, in attending to her. In shooting, fishing, playing whist, dancing, riding, and joining in "les jeux innocens," by which people at country-houses are wont to beguile the unoccupied evenings.

The nearest approach she had ever made to love in her life, was her liking for Treherne, and she was extremely vain of her supposed prisoner. His good looks, good manners, and good connections, caused many to envy her, and, if there was one thing Milly delighted in more than another, it was being envied. As to the members of Treherne's family, they coaxed and loved her more than ever: for they all thought she was the best "occupation" he could possibly find. Even Lady Eudocia was no exception; for that moral mother considered, first, that Helen did not seem to be thinking of him or he of her, and really Helen's health was so delicate she began to think she might not live; and secondly, her next daughter was scarcely old enough to come

out, and anything was better than Montagu being entangled meanwhile (as he was near being with that Brooke girl), into MARRIAGE. Let him attend to Milly. If Milly's husband was a fool, as aunt Myra called him, or a blind buzzard, as the Marchioness called him, that was nothing to them. Milly knew her own affairs best; trust her for managing them; and trust her, too, for not risking her position. They had devout confidence in her as a thorough woman of the world. If Treherne married one of the Wollingham girls, they knew beforehand with what tact Milly would fade into being Treherne's "friend." None of your vulgar regrets and sadnesses, and calling the world's attention to the past, but a proper fashionable carelessness; a carelessness calculated to make all but the initiated really feel puzzled and doubtful whether they had not all along been mistaken as to the degree of intimacy which had subsisted between the parties. And Milly so far deserved the confidence reposed in her by the moral family, that if—to do full justice to the depth of

her sentiment for Treherne—she did not exactly feel with respect to him "as lief soon as syne," yet she took instinctively the true worldly view, and vaguely anticipated that their union must end "*some day or other, as these things always did.*"

Some day or other: no need to look forward. Some day or other leaving her still with her title, her position, her reputation, her husband, her children, and her fashionable friends. To Beatrice Treherne was all in all. To Milly Nesdale, he was one triumph among many triumphs; one extra pleasure among a thousand pleasures: and his withdrawal would be a passing cloud—not a blank night of despair.

Meanwhile, everyone returned to town in the best possible humour. And even when Treherne thought it "right and necessary to avoid remark" by making some brief Christmas and New Year visitings,—Beatrice, absorbed in her baby, and believing in the necessity, remained cheerfully patient. There was a sort of hesitation at first in her lover's mind, whether he would not find her a

little cottage out of town, or in some of the suburban terraces which fringe the metropolis; for now she was well and able to go out, it was more awkward for her to continue residing where an evil chance had thrown her. But on consideration he gave up the scheme. His income was narrow, his friends on the watch, his time much occupied; she never had known more than one or two persons in London, or been to more than one or two balls; her family were in Wales; she had her apartments on the ground floor; and on the whole, it was less likely to create comment that she should remain so, than if he had established a household on ever so moderate a scale, and driven down in his smart cab to visit her.

Beatrice herself, too, was alarmed at the prospect of the sort of loneliness and exile such a plan seemed to promise; and though she fretted a little at still having to observe "les convenances," in not going out with Treherne, but with her nurse and baby except on rare occasions, late, when they were not likely to be seen; and though she

thought it hard she could not take the arm of her own husband, as other young married women did, and walk openly with him, or visit with him in the country,—still all this was temporary; and the matchless destiny of being his acknowledged wife, though she had walked the path to it through thorns, would compensate for all. If she had had many acquaintances, and they had all cut her, her position might have been made more apparent to her; but she had scarcely known any but members of Treherne's family and her own. Her separation from the former had already been almost complete, from Lady Diana's absence and Lady Eudocia's "dropping" the Brooke family. She missed only her father and Mariana; she could easily have borne the rest.

And Treherne missed nothing; he was as fêtéd, popular, and comfortable, as at any other period of his life. There was a sort of "*bruit sourd*" that there had been some "row" about some young girl "of very respectable parentage," whom his family had had great difficulty in pre-

venting his throwing himself away upon: for if several people in several different places take to discussing a subject by word or by letter, there must be some such result. But there was nothing that the least interfered with Treherne's comfort. He would not reckon (or if he did, it was to pooh-pooh it with a scornful smile) the conduct of Maurice Lewellyn, who, if he did not actually "cut" his brilliant cousin, behaved in a manner that fell very little short of that measure. He never called again in Stratton Street after that evening when he had seen Beatrice there. He never spoke to Treherne; the faint grave salutation, if they accidentally met, hardly amounted to a bow; he never shook hands again. But they met very rarely indeed. Treherne lived in the most outré circle of fashion and politics—the crême de la crême. Maurice was studying hard for the profession of the law; his general *set* of acquaintances was different; and anyone who has lived much in London knows how possible it is to live without ever meeting, even among re-

lations not in "the same set." Treherne contented himself with a sort of uneasy sneer: "So like his mother; so like my aunt Di, setting up to judge other people's affairs; rather amusing, too, being cut by my cousin, the doctor's son—consequential fellow!"

Yet Treherne did not in his heart think it very amusing. And young Maurice Lewellyn,—having cut his gay companionable relative, and being all but exiled himself from the house of Lady Eudocia, and left to sigh over the memory of the pink flush of welcome on Helen's smiling cheek, when her "Reader," as she called him, entered with his pleasant volume; having lost the ever-delightful companionship of his mother and his intellectual father by their present residence abroad; and having witnessed the misery of kindly Captain Brooke, the friend of his boyhood, and the degradation (as he believed) of the sister of pure saint-like Mariana; Maurice Lewellyn became graver than ever.

So things went on; and parliament met, and London "filled," and more wheels went racketing through the streets, and more people walked to and fro on the pavements, and more and more double raps were heard at all the street doors, all day long, but especially at dinner time. Busy town-gardeners raked and gravelled the sooty squares, and set crocuses and jonquils here and there among their dull evergreens and scrimped hawthorns. Black-stemmed trees, standing in courts and alleys, put out pinched buds that were to produce leaves about half the natural size of their country-grown brothers. Pallid children in scanty clothing, and wan dissolute-looking girls, vainly proffered violets tied by "pennorths" to a stick, to fine ladies whose gloved hands were nestled in their muffs: and laburnums nailed to the fronts of houses, covered themselves with a veil of tender green in spite of that imprisonment; as young town beggars, who never played in meadows, will keep "May-day" with a

few scattered cowslips. All in sign and token that the "London Spring" had commenced; and that the "London Season" was near at hand.

CHAPTER VII.

TREHERNE NOT A DOMESTIC CHARACTER.

It was on one of the pleasantest of these days of scrubby attempts at spring—one of those days when really there is somehow a consciousness in the air; as of bulb-roots breaking through mould, and primroses looking down from hedge-rows on fresh streamlets, and moss, and grass, and by-paths, and a better condition of nature certainly going on somewhere, though not exactly here in London. One of those days when even in cities (yea, in the dullest yard or closest work-shop of their walled-in places) there comes to us as it were a mysterious instinct that the sap of life is astir in this fair and misused world of ours;

and we call it "the feeling of spring," and think it sweet and comforting—like the sense of God's mercy to pious hearts dwelling in privation, after a morning prayer.

It was, I say, on one of these days, that Beatrice's baby was taken very ill.

She had walked out with him in the morning, and thought him heavy and languid in the nurse's arms, and carried him a little way herself, talking with smiles and endearments, and in that sweet language which mothers use. And now she was seated opposite to the nurse, who held him in her lap, practising to her guitar one of Gordigiani's perfect ballads; and smiling at him while she sang, fancying that even to him the melody gave pleasure. His large wandering eyes were fixed upon hers—he seemed to be listening; suddenly some inexplicable expression passed over his face; and before the frightened exclamation, "Oh! nurse, look!" had passed Beatrice's lips, the child was in strong convulsions.

The woman comforted the terrified young

mother with assurances that it was "nothing dangerous; that she had not mentioned it, but he had had a fit before; that he wasn't so strong as some children, but nothing to hurt:" the remedies her experience suggested were applied, and the alarm of the hour was over.

Then, when she saw her baby asleep (in a real sleep, instead of the sleep of death, as Beatrice had momentarily expected), she flew upstairs to Treherne's apartment to tell him what had occurred. He started: "My own dear Beatrice, you must really take care; if you had come three minutes sooner, you would have found General Perry and young Count Freiligrath here. I would have come down to you. What is it?"

"The baby—my blessed child—he has been so fearfully ill!"

"Well, dearest; but you must not let those sort of things deprive you of your presence of mind; you must remember—"

"Oh, Montagu! I have been so terrified;

I thought you would be sorry for him—for me. I thought you would come down and look at him; he is sleeping very quietly now."

"So I am sorry for you, darling, and I will come down and sit a little with you the moment I have finished my letters for post; before I go out for my ride. It is such a fine day, we are going to ride to Wimbledon or Richmond; and I was coming at all events to your room to tell you, because we may perhaps dine before we return, and I wished to prevent your waiting for me. But do send for me, instead of coming, another time!" And with a tender coaxing embrace, Treherne dismissed Beatrice downstairs.

"*Another time.*" He did not seem the least frightened or anxious: but nurse had said that men knew nothing about babies, and seldom cared for them. Beatrice sighed. Her spirits had been so discomposed that she would have given the world that Montagu could have stayed with her a little; walked with her; and not been engaged to ride and to dine. She dreaded the

long evening. What if baby should have another fit? Perhaps—perhaps Treherne would consider that; he was in a great hurry finishing his letters when he spoke to her; he would be more at leisure when he came down.

But Treherne was not "more at leisure;" on the contrary, he was very much hurried. He had "driven it to the last moment," and his horse was at the door; he could not keep the party waiting; they were to meet at the entrance of the ride in Hyde Park, and he must be off. He bent over the baby's crib for a moment, and said he hoped all was right; that he looked, as far as he could judge, "much as usual;" that he believed these little creatures very often had fits. And then he told Beatrice that he thought she was too much alone; and therefore,—Beatrice thought he was going to say, therefore he would not dine out—but he said therefore, as Count Freiligrath had been telling him about a German lady who had missed a situation as governess which she came to England on purpose to fill, and would be glad

to teach her own language, and read with anyone, would Beatrice like to engage her?

No; Beatrice did not wish it. She knew German pretty well; she could write it almost as well as Italian and French; and she did not need any companion.

"Except you, dear!" she said, as he took his riding whip and hat off the chair where he had laid them; and she looked wistfully up in his face.

"Well, to-morrow is Saturday and no House, and we will dine and go to the opera together."

To-morrow: not to-day. Certainly not this evening, however dispirited Beatrice felt; and she sighed again, even looking to to-morrow's opera; for even there (and rarely she went) she had to sit "in hiding," with the curtain carefully drawn across her side of the box. And so she looked once more for the millionth time at her pocket-book and notched off her days, and cheered herself with the certainty that little more than thirteen months now intervened before Montagu's twenty-sixth birthday.

But in the evening baby had another fit, and Beatrice had another phase of alarm. And from that time the leading thought of her mind became "how baby was." Insomuch that Treherne told her—half in discontented jest, and half in earnest—that he thought she was fonder of the child than of himself. But she was indeed, as he had said, "too much alone," and the long hours of solitary brooding made her feelings morbid. She felt her loneliness, too, in this respect. Her communing about her child was entirely with the nurse, or the kindly landlady. No young matrons came to see Beatrice: no one asked, with the natural sympathy of sex and age, news of her darling. No smiling mothers gathered round with pretty rivalry, taking off the hats of their silky-haired rosy babes, comparing curls and eyelashes and the dimpled fatness of tiny hands, and chatting with her of how soon the little pearly teeth appeared, and how soon *their* marvels had said PAPA! "quite distinctly." All that happy gossip of youthful wives, was a silent blank to Beatrice.

Having but one heart to sympathise with her, she drew largely on its patience—too largely, the heart being Treherne's. She wearied him with the ceaseless fears and tremors, hopes and doubts, insistings on his "judging for himself how baby seemed," and perpetual repetitions of what the nurse, the doctor, or the landlady had said with respect to him, and what had occurred in a hundred other cases to other infants similarly afflicted. She interrupted Treherne in narrations of what interested him, with information that baby had or had not eaten his dinner that day with appetite. Twice when Montagu proposed to drive her into the country, she "feared to leave her little one alone so long."

All this bored Treherne to death. Perhaps under no circumstances would he have been a tender father, but as it was, it was not too much to say, that he felt towards "little Frank" nothing but the extremest aversion and repugnance.

Sometimes, when he was struck by the extraordinary beauty of Beatrice as she held the poor

little thing in her arms; by the expression of her face, the grace of her figure, more lovely than all the Madonnas he had ever seen in all the galleries in Europe, the fever of passionate admiration beat as quickly in Treherne's pulse as in the earliest days of his wooing. But passion is not affection; as the wild and dreadful stories of our police-courts may testify; where murder often blots out the misnomer of LOVE, or some starving girl carries her workhouse-born infant to the presence of her seducer, and is turned away to despair and death.

Passion is not affection. Perhaps the reason why that appeal "for the sake of the past" has less influence with the sterner sex than with women, is that (allowing for exceptions), affection is the root of love in women, and passion is the root of love in men. The selfish brutality of some men to women they have ceased to "love," is something quite inconceivable. And that without reference to desert. It is not the flinging off the toils of the worthless when the hour of passion is over,—for the purest and most innocent-hearted women

have had this fate to endure. But till we have ceased to stumble over a great mystery at the very threshold of the temple of love; and to insist on accounting with a great reasonable WHY for apparently inexplicable fancies or forsakings, by analysing the merits or demerits of the object of preference, we shall continue to wonder and to blunder. For it is *not* in the merit of the person beloved that the secret of constancy lies, so much as in the nature of the person loving. Once admit that fact, and we cease to marvel at the infatuated clinging to some Manon Lescaut, and the forsaken anguish of a Louise de la Vallière; at the patient tenderness of wives with worthless husbands, and the enduring generosity of husbands with heartless wives; at the ever-shifting sensuality of some "Bluff King Harry" in whom the flame of love was but the grosser torch of desire; or at the fanciful pursuit of the "*riso angelico*' by some poetical Petrarch.

There are men to whom constancy is an unknown feeling, and Treherne was one of them.

Of the two emblematic gods of the heathen fable, Eros and Anteros, he knew only the earthly deity. He was already beginning to be a little "tired" of Beatrice—tired of the monotony that surrounded her. He was rather dissatisfied at finding himself so relieved and amused at Milly Nesdale's; but he never reflected that he had there the united conversation of all sorts of clever men and clever women, instead of the single-handed attempt to amuse him made by Beatrice, with her books, music, and poetry, and blank ignorance of all else in his world. He merely felt 'bored,' and resumed his habit of daily visiting there and elsewhere; and dining out wherever and whenever it suited him to do so.

Milly shewed, too, an extreme disposition to flirt with Herr Freiligrath, who was related to the poet of that name, and was a young man of singular good looks, and clever eager conversation; and her flirting revived a sort of imperious jealousy in Treherne; for he had another peculiarity of male attachments, that

the object of his attention was twice as commendable in his opinion if she was the object of other men's attentions.

Milly, surrounded, applauded, visited, flattered; Milly, who was able to check a merry laugh in a chorus of other laughers, to attend to him and condescendingly say, "I beg your pardon; what did you tell me? they were all laughing so, I did not hear you," was a far more considerable woman than Beatrice, listening to every syllable he uttered, watching his every glance for the mood of the hour, colouring her own mood from it, grave or gay, like a chameleon; and breaking perhaps by some observation about "baby" that eternal silence "*à deux*" which made the atmosphere in which they lived.

Milly riding out, with her floating feather and slender waist, the centre of an animated cavalcade of horsemen; Milly lounging back in a barouche, smiling from under her lace parasol at fine ladies and fine gentlemen, on a fine summer evening in Hyde Park; Milly tripping across the crowded lawn

at "a breakfast," and dropping the folds of her soft Indian shawl from her shoulders to her waist as she passed; Milly triumphantly chatting under the glittering chandeliers of royal and aristocratic balls, dressed with the most perfect and irreproachable taste (the only quality irreproachable about her); Milly "receiving" at home, as she had received the morning we have mentioned, when Treherne was so "égayé" and as she received very often during the London season; all these changeful phases of Milly's shining, gave her a vast superiority over home-staying lonely Beatrice!

The sterner sex have a very scornful mode of alluding to the dazzling effect of the military profession on young ladies, and their weakness for "a red coat, a military band, and fellows in uniform:" but there are uniforms of gauze and velvet, and bands whose music consists of the buzz of flattery, which might be proved to be quite as bewildering to the lords of creation.

If women are allured by the vague notions of

hero-life connected with a scarlet coat and epaulettes—men equally succumb to the attraction of a hushed boudoir, a tasselled cushion, and several yards of lace: if women are "dazed" by the glitter of name, fame, and princely titles, men are equally dazed by the Queendom of that shifting sceptre, which is held by the Reigning Beauty of the day.

To the shallow, the vain, and the sensual, the "entourâge" of a woman signifies often more than the woman herself. One woman has often "cut another out," whose superiority, if dissected and analysed, would be found to be composed of the carriage that whirled her up to the door, the nimble footman who rapped at it, the soft carpet on the handsome staircase, the drawing-room to which it led, and the gilt stand full of geraniums, heliotropes, and roses in the curtained window.

The love that sits in a shabbier room, clothed in a shabbier gown; that walks in thick-soled shoes,

or goes out in a hired brougham, or a hack-cab, has a proportionately inferior charm.

For luxury is the nearest approach to the ideal, made by certain natures; it is the poetry of Belial:—

> Belial, the fleshliest spirit that fell from heaven;

and with some men, the flattery of others to the object of their preference, is the keenest spur to their wavering desires.

But Milly Nesdale was not the only occupier of Treherne's leisure; nor the only attraction to his fancy. Mrs. Hammond was in town. Not in fashionable society; not *yet* in fashionable society; but in town; in the park, at races, at the opera, at certain balls; creating, whenever she did happen to be seen, a great sensation by her beauty, her dress, and her willingness to be admired. She still "trifled" with Treherne; and his family did not respond to any attempt on his part to get her much invited, for they sagely and steadily considered Milly his fittest "occupation;" nor,

enamoured of Beatrice, had Treherne followed up his pursuit with any great eagerness. But Mrs. Hammond was marked by him for conquest, as a tree is marked to be cut down in a plantation; and meanwhile he amused himself by calling on her occasionally, and found a certain charm (the charm of novelty) even in her undeniable provincialisms and vulgarity. He smiled when she dropped an "h" as if she had spoken the pretty broken English of some graceful foreigner; and her "ways" entertained him; more than Beatrice's, who was simply simple, not vulgar; and more than Milly's, who if she was "coquette raffinée," was so according to all rules and observances of fashionable life; such as he had been accustomed to ever since his puppy eyes opened upon his worldly world, and which had therefore nothing salient in it, or enticing.

But meanwhile, what with Milly, and what with Mrs. Hammond, and engagements in political and social circles, Treherne was so excessively occupied, and so much absent from "home," that

gradually Beatrice became conscious of a comfortless, forsaken, chilled feeling; like one who wakes from being too lightly covered on a winter's night. Even the Wednesdays, and Saturdays, and Sundays, when there was no House of Commons, no longer, as at first, secured Treherne's presence in her apartment; and as to the evening walks which had been such a joy to her, they were quite a thing of the past.

One of those small incidents too, which rouse people to a keener observance of the feelings of those with whom they associate, than the incidents themselves seemed to warrant, occurred about this time. Beatrice had not seen Treherne since the preceding day; he had gone out early, very early, saying he thought of speaking on the question before the House that evening, and would "look up" the subject at his club. She did not know when he had returned. She had been looking for the debate next morning in the paper, when he came in; and as he took it, and ran his eye over it after their first greeting, she said:

"What is the meaning of the expression 'the House was counted out?'" Treherne was glancing eagerly at an article on diplomatic salaries and reforms; he answered without looking up: "It means that there were not members enough to make a House—that there was no House."

The colour flushed in Beatrice's cheek. "But then—but then you were—not in the House at all?"

"No, of course not; indeed I foresaw it would be counted out."

"*Where were you, Montagu?*"

The tone in which Beatrice said this, startled Treherne to consciousness; he looked off the paper, rather discomposed at the emotion visible in her face. "I was—I had engagements;" said he, impatiently.

He looked back to his paper. Beatrice did not speak. After running his eye down the column, he threw the paper aside and rose. "My dear Beatrice, how very foolish; if you want to know where I was, I am quite willing to tell you."

"No; it is sufficient that you were not here; that you could have come, and preferred being away. I have seen you lately less — and less — and less—" and Beatrice burst into tears.

Something of self-reproach, and still more of dislike to a scene, mingled with Treherne's passionate admiration for Beatrice's beauty as she stood before him flushed and tearful, with quivering lips and kindled eye. He caressed her; he soothed her; he spoke all sorts of coaxing comfortable words; he told her he had come on purpose to take her with him to spend the summer day in Windsor Park, which she had never seen.

And Beatrice dried her tears, and smiled, and went; and while they wandered among the oaks of Windsor, and rowed on the river by Eton, she repeated by heart the whole of Gray's famous ode; and the lovely sunset glowed and faded, and the soft moon came out and shone serenely on their homeward drive, and Beatrice set it down among other blessed evenings of

love, and peace, and tenderness; and smiled in her sleep as dreams brought her back the river, the "antique towers," and the "watery glade," — and woke hopeful and re-assured.

They would have few separate engagements when once she was acknowledged as his wife; and he loved her so tenderly! She ought to be contented.

But again there came blank days; disturbed doubtful days; and again there came occasions on which a sort of instinct told her that Treherne was somehow "excusing" himself from the opportunity of being with her. He went to the House, on one of these days, telling her the debate would probably occupy all the evening, and that he would dine at his Club.

She tried to occupy herself. She tried to sing. She took out her drawing. She attempted to read. But the restless beat at her heart seemed answered, like the pendulum of a clock, by the aching pulse in her brain; and she called to

the nurse to accompany her in a walk, for she thought the air would do her good.

Through the Green Park, past the gambols of children, and the sauntering of friendly groups; through that garden so dusty and unrefreshing after its momentary spring; down the broad dull street that leads to Westminster Abbey,—and, after a hesitating pause, across to Westminster Bridge. To look down on the water seemed a sort of quenching of some internal thirst. She stood on the bridge a few minutes, and looked thoughtfully towards the stately Houses of Parliament. The nurse rested the little one on the parapet, and said—

"We must take care Master Frank does not take cold."

Beatrice turned suddenly.

"Oh yes; let us go: how thoughtless of me to come here!"

But as she turned, a carriage drove rapidly past, and she saw—Treherne! She was sure of it, though only his golden hair and cheek, pressed

against the cheek of a curly-headed child with whom he was romping, were visible. As they passed, the child with a laugh flung a glove, one of Treherne's gloves, out of the carriage-window; a lady's voice said "Naughty!" a hand pulled the check-string, and Treherne put his head out of the window, saying: —

"Oh no, it is not worth while; the boys will lose the beginning. Go on — Astley's."

It was Treherne. Caressing, playing with a child. Whose child?—he that never played with little Frank! It was his glove; Beatrice stooped and picked it up. The nurse was looking at the steamboats shooting down the river, and prattling to baby.

"We will go home now," Beatrice said.

As they crossed by Canning's statue, she saw the gentlemen who were members of the House crowding from it in walking groups, or mounting their horses, or called for by wives and daughters. The House was "up." Some one, as she looked

anxiously over the road to see if baby might cross safely, exclaimed eagerly to his companion—

"Oh! what a beautiful girl! what a glorious face!"

And Beatrice had that first dull dreadful sense of the valuelessness of abstract advantages,—of the being beautiful *in vain*,—which has bitterness enough in it to comfort the ugly for the most mortified days they can ever spend.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEATRICE IS JEALOUS.

BEATRICE had remarked the liveries of that carriage. She hoped, rather feverishly, that Treherne would tell her next day how his evening had been spent. He used to describe people, and parties, and the things that had amused him; but he spoke not a word on this special occasion. Even when she said, "Did you stay long at the House?" he only answered evasively, "As long as I was obliged; and then I dressed at the Club."

But one evening, when almost all the carriages had left the park, Beatrice saw that carriage waiting at the gate of Kensington Gardens: and

it so happened that the nurse being ill, good-natured Mrs. Laing the landlady, had volunteered to accompany Beatrice, and carry little Frank. Now Mrs. Laing was a very experienced Londoner, and could have told the carriages of all the "nobility and gentry," as if she kept muster-roll for a tournament. She told Beatrice, in answer to her question, that the carriage was Lady Nesdale's. Beatrice lingered near the gate. She half expected to see Treherne and Milly come from their walk among the trees—to see him hand Lady Nesdale to her carriage. But it was not so. The little boys alone appeared: the boy whose cheek had been pressed to Treherne's, and another, and their governess,—who desired they might be driven quickly home, as "milady would want the carriage to go out to dinner when she returned from her ride."

She was riding, then. Was *he* riding? Where was he—this mock-husband and no-father, who caressed other people's children and accompanied other people's wives? Beatrice felt bitter. "I

would like to look at the riders a little, Mrs. Laing," she said; and they walked slowly by the farther side of the Serpentine to the end.

Many a joyous laugh, many a fragment of conversation, many an awkward and many a graceful form went by; but no Treherne. Suddenly a group came on at a rapid canter. He was there—he passed —like a flash—his head turned away, listening to a beautiful woman who was trying to rein in her horse, and giggling like a school-girl at her want of success! Beatrice had never heard of Mrs. Hammond; it was a relief to her to see a stranger instead of Milly: or would have been a relief, but that in a moment more—just as Mrs. Hammond reined in at last,—pushed her dishevelled curls back, and subsided, flushed and breathless, into an attitude of more repose on her saddle,—the Hindoo goddess herself came by, with her usual cavalcade, and Helen Wollingham, and Freiligrath, and one of Nesdale's uncles.

The anger in Milly's changeful face, as she looked at Treherne, woke an echo of greater anger

in Beatrice. But an exclamation from Helen Wollingham drew the attention of both groups. She turned deadly pale—she seemed about to fall from her horse. Mrs. Hammond bowed, and rode on with her party. Treherne dismounted. Beatrice dared not stay. She only heard Helen say, "I thought I saw——" and then check herself; she put away Treherne's hand with a sort of shudder, and accepted, instead, the help of Lady Nesdale's uncle; while Milly looked sharply round, as if seeking for the occasion of her alarm. Once Beatrice looked back, as she rapidly crossed in the opposite direction from the riders. Treherne was talking earnestly to Lady Nesdale, leaning towards her, his hand on the pommel of her saddle—riding very slowly, at a foot's pace; and Helen, who had remounted, pale and silent, and attended by the gentlemen of her party, followed.

When Treherne came in to dress, he said to Beatrice, "Were you in Hyde Park, to-day? For God's sake, be careful! Do not go there when people are riding or driving."

"*People!*" Beatrice murmured, with a choked voice.

"Do not go there without my knowing beforehand," repeated Treherne, impatiently.

Beatrice answered with equal impatience, ill suppressed: "Montagu, our position is so unnatural, that it is quite intolerable to me!"

"Ah! tears again!" exclaimed he, in a tone of exasperation. "Be reasonable—be reasonable! I only feared that Helen recognised you. I wish no one to know you are in London—for your own sake, Beatrice!"

And once more looking on his beautiful companion with a mixture of pity, passion, and discontent, he pressed her in his arms and repeated, "for your *own* sake!"

And Beatrice sighed; and Treherne dressed, and went out to his dinner engagement.

Then Beatrice had a visitor, of a humbler sort —utterly uninvited; for Mrs. Benson, the Marchioness's Abigail, came to see her.

And the event came to pass on this wise.

Lady Nesdale, with a quick though puzzled perception that "something was wrong" after the scene in the park,—rather hastened her toilette and the keeping her appointment to go to the opera with the Marchioness of Updown; and coming into the glittering purple dressing-room a little before that superb lady was ready, stood by the toilette, privately calculating how to discover what she wanted to know, but apparently absorbed in a pleased contemplation of her friend's appearance.

"How *very* nice you look this evening! I declare no one would think you could have reached your thirtieth year (she was fifty); and how glossy your hair is,—how very glossy! I was saying this morning to Freiligrath, that it was such pretty *German* hair—such a bright-coloured chestnut—so peculiar, and so beautiful! I was talking about your hair to him."

Naughty, sly Milly! whose real observations (intended to *désillusionner* the young Count, and prevent his adopting the notion of most foreigners

newly come to England, that the Marchioness and her *salon* were the most important things in that country), were, on the contrary, to the last degree disparaging! For she said (Hindoo Milly) that it was such a pity the Marchioness's hair was beginning to get grey; only beginning, but still it was such a change! And when the youthful Freiligrath naïvely said that he had not perceived the defect, Milly replied, "Ah! yes; that is because it is light hair—light hair does not show so much the getting grey; till it is *very* grey it does not show! It only gets a little duller and dryer and more ashy-looking, if you understand; a sort of dead hair, all pale and nasty! If my hair got grey, ever so little—oh! how I shall hate that future time!"—(for Milly affected extreme youth); "my hair would show directly those dreadful silver threads, because it is so brown and dark; but the Marchioness's hair will not show for a long, long time: and I am so glad, because I love her so—in spite of all her faults, and all her foolishness,

and her being rather selfish, and all that—I do really love her, because she has been kind to me since I was a little little thing; a little, helpless, Indian child, shivering in this English cold. I used to hide my little face then in her muff and in the palm of her hand, and she used to laugh because I said her hand *comforted* my face, being so fat and warm; and I hid my poor little face in it."

And Milly laughed a little tender sorrowful laugh at the imaginary picture of the giant hand "comforting" her delicate *museau*. And Freiligrath looked at Milly, and thought what a piquante winning creature she was, and how lucky that the fat hands of a corpulent semi-grey ashy-haired Marchioness, should have acted the part of the Eccaleobion, and hatched to warmth and life such a pretty dark-eyed dove! And Milly sniggered privately at Freiligrath; but outwardly smiled one of her bewitching smiles.

This was the real statement of her opinion as to the hair she now gazed at so admiringly. And

she wound up by a little speech which, unfortunately for her, was overheard by Benson, as Beatrice's sobbing had been overheard; for Benson considered the dressing-room door only in the light of a sentinel's box, where she herself stood sentry; and she listened with still increasing indignation while Milly continued.

"Yes, your hair is really lovely, but it is not done justice to. You ought to have it dressed *à l'imperatrice*, the new fashion. It would suit you admirably; for the outline of your cheek is still as round as a girl's, only that stupid old Benson would never *coiffer* you in that graceful way. She is such an old-fashioned old thing. I know of a French maid that would make you look twenty years younger. Benson's ways are quite out of date."

And then (oh! treachery) the French maid's direction was pencilled on the ivory tablets; and they fell to talking fashions, and from that to riding-habits, and so round—Milly and the serpent of subtlety alone knew how—to Treherne,

and Helen Wollingham, and the scene in the park; and whether it was possible there was still any truth in the floating rumours of some love story not creditable to Montagu; and the Marchioness told Milly all she knew of such matters, and narrated Beatrice's amazing visit to herself, and Milly listened with that evil face which Beatrice had once seen at the opera.

Benson's face, also, was not very amiable and extremely flushed, when tying on her bonnet with a very irregular and careless tie, she set out for Treherne's lodgings in Stratton Street, resolved to discover the great secret for herself, whether Miss Brooke was there "in hiding." And telling the great fib (for which I hope Heaven will pardon Benson) that Mr. Treherne had sent her on a message to the young lady, she stoutly made her way to Beatrice's apartment; poured into her ear every conceivable and inconceivable calumny against Milly; proving that she and Treherne had been, and continued to be, on terms of wicked intimacy; and finally flounced out of

the presence of the trembling and bewildered Beatrice, muttering audibly as she closed the door, "There! I think I've put *you* into hot water, my Lady Nesdale, for the ill turn you've tried to do *me*!"

On Beatrice's passionate nature her words fell like oil on fire. Her smouldering jealousy of Milly burst into a blaze. The blood beat in her ears with the sound of a waterfall; rapid visions, set in some wavering lurid light, of all the occasions on which she had seen Lady Nesdale, whirled in repeated circles round her brain. She saw her in her red headdress chatting at the opera; she saw her riding in that sunshine in the park; she saw her carriage passing over Westminister Bridge with Treherne's cheek and golden hair against the child's cheek; and round and round again those same visions galloped in succession, as she stood, sick and dizzy, staring at the door by which Benson had departed.

And other visions followed: things she had *not* seen; creations of disturbed fancy; tender looks

and wooing words addressed by Montagu to her rival; summer walks in shady avenues (much Milly would have cared for such walks!); winter visits in warm hushed drawing-rooms, with the dying light of day, and the sparkle of a cheerful fire, sole witnesses to laughing conversations, or earnest vows.

Wild were the rapid pictures she drew, and wild, as she drew them, were the throbbings of her heart. She walked to and fro like a creature in a cage. She pressed her hands to her head, and dropped them, damp and clenched, by her side. Then she stood still again; looking at dumb surrounding objects with a vague stare of inquiry, as though they held a spell of answer to the question, "Is he false, or is he true?"

How long her trance of jealousy lasted, she knew not; but long it must have been, for she was roused from it by the sound of the latch-key turning in the street door. Dinner and evening engagements were over, and, with a light final puff to his cigar as he flung the

end of it away, the calm, well-dressed, well-amused favourite of fashion closed the door of the house, and suddenly confronted Beatrice coming out of the door of her ground-floor apartment, wild with the passion of the hour; pale, jaded, with dilated eyes, her hair tangled and pushed back from her forehead, and her whole appearance that of a person who had "seen a ghost."

"Good Heavens, Beatrice," said Treherne, in a displeased voice, "what is the matter? Is the child ill again? Will you never learn prudence? Suppose I had brought some fellow in with me. I only parted from Perry at the corner of this street."

The wistful eyes looked still in his face, and filled with tears; she drew him gently into the room from which she had come. "Oh! Montagu!" she said, in a choked voice, "it is not that; he is well—Frank is well—but I have heard something; something I cannot believe, about you. I will not believe it! Be sincere with

me. Is it me, oh! *is* it me you love, or that woman—that wicked *married* woman?"

"What woman?"

"Lady Nesdale—Lady Nesdale—Montagu!"

Treherne gave a short scornful laugh.

"Oh! say it is not true; *swear* it is not true; or I shall go mad."

"I do swear it is not true, by any oath you like; what folly this is, Beatrice!"

"Will you, will you swear *by Frank's life*; he is lying here asleep in his cradle. Will you swear by my boy's life?"

"I will; I do, Beatrice."

"That you do not love her—that there is nothing between you that might not be between common friends and acquaintance—that there never has been."

"That there is nothing between us—nothing, nor ever has been; I swear it most solemnly. Oh, Beatrice! how can you believe such things of me? Do you think if strangers told me some evil of you, I should credit it so easily?"

"I am so alone—and so—so anxious, Montagu," faltered she: "but you have sworn, and that is enough."

Some men swear easily. The last touch that evening on Treherne's gloved hand had been the pressure of another small hand,—in pledge of an appointment next day of a kind that Beatrice would have found hard to reconcile with his present declaration,—the hand of astute Milly Nesdale; and that appointment Milly kept, and so did Treherne, as though no such person as Beatrice Brooke existed.

CHAPTER IX.

WOMEN WHO KEEP THEIR REPUTATION.

But the next appointment Milly did not keep; not though she herself had made it, and taken coaxing pains to impress punctuality on Treherne, and arranged as usual some sparkling little lie for Nesdale, as to the employment of her time; saying she had promised to read to dear Helen Wollingham, and even if she altogether missed the gaieties of that particular evening, she must go first, in her morning dress, to that dear sweet sickly girl!

So Nesdale went to the House. And Treherne also went into the House; to wait till a little lace handkerchief peeping through the *grille*

of the Ladies' Gallery, told him that Milly was there as she had agreed with him. But Milly had something else to contrive; so she told the servant that as she required the carriage later in the evening, she would not take it then, but would walk to Grosvenor Square. And to Grosvenor Square she walked accordingly, and stayed ten minutes; that if by any accident Nesdale alluded to her charitable visit to Helen Wollingham, nothing might seem strange. And at the expiration of the ten minutes, Milly went softly and deliberately away again, got into a cab, and desired to be driven to the corner of Stratton Street; and gliding up that street in the dim twilight, she stopped and scrutinized Treherne's door, rapped at it, and said with a sweet confidential smile to the maid who opened it, "Let me in quick; I want to see the lady who lodges here; she and I were at school together, and I shall be so glad to see her again, poor thing; I only knew to-day that she was here." And the servant merely saying, "Oh! it is for the young missus,"

opened the door of Beatrice's room with the information, "please, mum, here's a visitor," as Milly slipped in.

For Milly, also, had resolved to have certain doubts solved; and being of a courageous temperament, had taken this method of solving them.

As she entered, Beatrice was stooping over the sofa, laying her little one on it. Her back was towards Lady Nesdale; but as the servant spoke, she turned quickly,—and the Real bad woman, and the Nominal bad woman, stood face to face!

The real bad woman,—with her reputation preserved, her husband deceived, her friends made accomplices, her very children innocent partakers of schemes of guilty rendezvous,—unblamed; unquestioned; asked everywhere to meet her lover; fêted, flattered, and caressed; and the nominal bad woman,—the woman without a reputation—unowned and unhonoured; faithful and fond; a true wife; an innocent mother; betrayed, not betraying; and degraded only through the baseness of others.

The frank face and noble brow met the gaze of those sly glittering Hindoo eyes; the rich complexion flushed and then grew pale. Neither spoke; not because Milly was embarrassed, but that for once she was at a disadvantage. She did not feel perfectly sure that the person she saw was the person she expected to see. Beatrice did not fulfil her ideas of beauty; she had rather foreign ideas on the subject—French ideas, which never can disconnect the hero from his coat and gloves, or the heroine from the style of her toilette. Something negligent and countrified in the dress Beatrice wore, something heavy and statuesque in her figure, seemed to Milly,—who was always "*à quatre epingles*," — verging on dowdy, verging on clumsy. She doubted if she really saw before her the mistress of that refined dandy whose conquest had so flattered her own vanity. She had never seen Beatrice; but had heard much of her success at the ball from which the irate Marchioness of Updown had omitted Lady Nesdale in token of wrath for her saucy

excuse on a previous occasion. Could *this* be the brilliant girl whose one appearance in the world of fashion had made such a stir, and was said to have bewitched Montagu Treherne?

Milly hesitated. She glanced round the apartment at the sleeping child—the bird-cage—the piano—the work-basket—the look of home, but only of woman's home; she doubted—and was at a disadvantage.

Not so Beatrice; she instantly recognized the *mignonne* face and slender figure of her rival; and instantly stood on guard against her; for however slow in knowledge of the world, her perceptions were rapid enough on other subjects. She felt instinctively that Milly was there to discover the great secret of Treherne's life; and with that instinct came also the conviction that Montagu could not love or confide much in this woman if she was thus compelled to seek after him, to intrude on his home, and pry into his affairs. She stood determinately silent. She would not ask "to what she owed the pleasure of

this visit." She did not withdraw her eyes from Milly's face even during the rapid wandering survey taken by the other of her goods and chattels. Milly was compelled to speak first. She did so in a sweet, playful, almost childish manner, with a coquetish assumption of shyness, —"I fear I have made a mistake," she said; "this comes of such imprudences; I thought this was the apartment of a great friend of mine, Mr. Treherne, and I wanted to speak with him on important subjects."

"This apartment is mine. It is a mistake," was all that Beatrice said in answer.

"In fact," continued Milly, as if she had scarcely heard the reply, "my business was rather with a person, a young lady, whose family I know —who has disgraced them, poor girl, and, who is living with Mr. Treherne as his wife."

She paused; but not even that last stabbing thrust could disarrange the fence of her simpler adversary. "Mr. Treherne does not live here; I live here," was spoken coldly and gravely, as

though the sharp terrible sentence were one utterly indifferent to the hearer.

Again the doubt of Beatrice's identity thrilled through Lady Nesdale's mind, with a certain irritated fear of being ridiculous. She could not surely have mistaken the number on the house door; it was familiar to her on Treherne's notes and letters. Just as this second doubt suggested itself, and Milly was turning to go,—her eyes fell on a book; the last new book of travels. It was *her* book; a smart complimentary copy "from the author." She herself had lent it to Treherne. Her coronet and initials were on the binding. Involuntarily her hand moved towards it, and was instantly withdrawn. The gesture was not lost on Beatrice: and when the evil eyes glanced back from the book to the face of Treherne's love,—that face was lit by a smile of triumph; and the beauty Milly had thought so inferior to her expectations, shone out upon her as the smiting of Heaven's glory shone down upon Saul.

A shiver of rage; a resolution, even in that rapid instant, to pay back the baffling of the moment with a long resolute vengeance, rippled darkly over the soul of the Hindoo lady: but she made no sign! She commanded herself; she did not know that she stood revealed to Beatrice—that the latter was perfectly aware in whose presence she was—that Beatrice, the passionate impulsive Beatrice, was choking with the desire to pronounce her name aloud with scorn and defiance;—to say—"Yes, Lady Nesdale, it is I! hunt him down if you will; take him from me if you can! I am his beloved: you—you are forsaken, if ever he loved you—you painted toy, wrapped in luxurious adornings! Here is his home—this is his child—and in a brief year or so I will confront you as his acknowledged wife!"

But though Lady Nesdale did not know that she was known, she had obtained the information she desired. It was all true then. This was Beatrice Brooke, and she was Treherne's mistress. As she

left, after attempting a careless little apology for her intrusion and error, she asked the servant if there were many lodgers. No, the girl said, there were only two apartments for letting; the landlady herself lived in the upper story. There was only Mr. Treherne's drawing-room apartment, and the ground floor, which was let to the young widow-lady. Was either likely to be vacant? No: the girl did not expect the lodgers would move. Both apartments were taken by the year.

So Milly went away satisfied: if the feeling, as of a caustic blister on her heart, could be called satisfaction. But even before her bonnet-strings were untied, and her small boots carried away and exchanged for dainty slippers by her attentive maid, a whole drama of wreck and ruin for Beatrice had unrolled itself in her busy brain. Would she succeed? Surely yes; only in romance and melodrama does true love beat cunning, and simplicity make victorious way against worldly success. The "unequal match" is never played

out, that is won by sleight-of-hand. She laid her resolute little head on her pillow that night with its schemes as neatly and orderly packed away as the furbelowed dresses in her wardrobe; and slept as soundly as a guileless child.

Sounder than Beatrice could sleep. The smile of triumph that had lit that classical and lovely face like sunshine, faded like sunshine in the after twilight of her thoughts. True; Lady Nesdale's visit proved her to be somehow neglected and suspicious of Montagu; but it proved also that she had, or imagined she had, some claim upon him. It was not consistent with his declaration that nothing was between them but friendship and acquaintance; it was not consistent with the oath he had taken, when he swore *by Frank's life* to the truth of his assertion.

Beatrice looked at her sleeping boy and shuddered. Was it possible a man should swear falsely to such an oath? Surely it was *not* possible! Still she felt feverish and uneasy; and though after long rumination she decided not to mention Lady

Nesdale's visit to Treherne, she pondered and wondered; and that evening, and almost daily — morning and evening,—forced by that strange magnetic spell which so often draws us to speak on the subjects we most resolve to avoid; that spell which brings all conversation round at last to the one fatal point; she vexed her own soul, and bored and irritated Montagu, by allusions, and questions, and conjectures, of which Lady Nesdale was chief and perpetual cause. All Beatrice Brooke's thoughts were overshadowed by this one thought—to her own undoing!

There are two things so difficult in this world as to be almost impossible. One is, to amuse an invalid when *you* know (though the sufferer does not) that he or she is dying. The other, to be "pleasant" to one you passionately love, with a doubt in your heart. Beatrice would not own, even to herself, that she doubted Treherne; but she did doubt him. Besides, it was some little time since he had made that solemn denial, and what might not subsequent temptation and scheming have

brought about? In vain Treherne comforted her in his own way. He had a little set of phrases for such occasions—a sort of Cupid's Dialogue Book and Manual for Lovers, which during his hundred and one conquests of various kinds he had got by rote, and which he uttered with pleading softness, deprecating earnestness, or warmth of honest resentment, according as he deemed the special case required. If the doubter were young and beautiful, he appealed to her own conviction whether she *could* be rivalled by some faded charmer not worthy to tie her sash; if foolish and prattling, he "hated blues;" if intelligent and ugly, he "never could comprehend how *any* degree of loveliness could balance the delights of companionship." If vulgar, he scoffed at the beau-monde and your "inane ladies of fashion" (and this was a tone he was fond of taking with Mrs. Hammond and such minor graces). If belonging to the crême de la crême of society, he exulted in "the rest and refinement which made to him the poetry of every-day life."

To Beatrice he poured forth the first dialogue of the phrase-book. "How *can* you keep harping on that worn-out string, my beautiful love, of Lady Nesdale's seductive graces? Do you think it probable that I should be in love with a woman of that age — a faded little worldly woman, pretending to be clever when she is only précieuse, and making the most absurd attempts to seem a sort of combination of nondescript qualities — talking like an old ambassador, and flirting like a school-girl?"

With Milly, after their somewhat sneering but never stormy explanations, he took the very opposite tone; and affected such indifference for "mere beauty," and such devotion to "peculiarity and charm," that all things but her own influence seemed mere passing follies. Even after that personal conviction of inconstancy in the matter of Beatrice, Milly did not lose confidence in her own power. As she looked at herself of a morning in the pier-glass, dressed crimp and fresh as a doll, she compared herself with the vision of

her rival, and lo! the latter seemed to give a renewed impression of being clumsy and dowdy; and the hold of such attractions, unbacked by worldly circumstance, would not go for much with such a man as Montagu!

Lady Nesdale did not tell her "lover" what she knew. That would have been most impolitic. He would be driven to a decision—to renouncing one or the other perhaps; and Milly did not feel quite sure which, *at this actual time*, he might feel it easiest to renounce. It would make a quarrel between them, and Milly never quarrelled; she only laughed and sneered a little, which gave her a certain position of superiority when displeased. Nor could she own to the visit at his lodging, without showing that her endeavour to secure his being in the House of Commons under pretence of being herself there at a particular hour, was a snare and a deceit; and if there was a thing Milly wished to impress on her admirers, it was her naïve sincerity. She deceitful! never. So, for

different reasons, both Treherne's "loves" kept their own counsel as to that eventful visit; and with Milly his task of soothing was comparatively easy, partly from her innate vanity, and partly from her astute policy. She determined to take no notice openly of what had occurred; she determined that she and her house should be more charming than ever, and she and her house were more charming than ever, and Treherne breathed there as in the garden of Armida.

But alas! Beatrice was not more charming than ever. She was less charming than Treherne had ever known her. Peace of mind and rest of body seemed to have forsaken her. She wandered and pondered, and adopted at length the fatal folly of watching his movements to help her to a decision. She sauntered out into roads where he had gone, and gazed across the paths where he might come. She sat under the trees in Kensington Gardens, imagining every pair of pedestrian loungers that flitted through their shade might be wicked Milly and Treherne. She crossed at incredible

speed from the spot where she had lingered, to some other vantage ground of observation, on the wild fancy that she recognised him in the ride. Then she stood hot and pale, weary and breathless, looking, but having lost him in the crowd, as one loses some friend in a dream. Stupefied and sorrowful, she heard the frank hearty laugh of one, the fragmentary conversation of others, the greeting by name, the whistling call to a dog, as the varying groups cantered or galloped past her, through the hot sunshine and declining day, till the dewy time that brought to her brain no coolness, when he was to return "home" again, to dress for dinner engagements and worldly réunions where she could not go.

Sometimes she saw him, and sometimes not; and ever as she watched, the morbid despondency of love seemed to smite her down to abject humility. The world seemed to swarm with beautiful forms! How fair, and young, and smooth the soft cheeks and the glossy plaits of hair of the slender girls careering past her on their well-

trained steeds! How meagre, and dusty, and unlovely she herself seemed in comparison! How could he single her out of such a world, and love her best? And indeed, though the condition of her mind was strained and unnatural in its degree, the feeling itself is common enough, for there never was man or woman yet, who, in the presence of a great passion, did not undervalue personal advantages. Let beauty, wit, wealth, power, be all combined,—the deep instinct of the heart, with its sorrowful one want in this crowded world of wishes, feels that all are insufficient to balance what all would be given up to secure. Much has been bestowed by Heaven, but not enough! Not enough to purchase the priceless treasure of that unit's love! And yet the creature loved may be as imperfect as the creature loving, or utterly inferior. The mystery rests with Him who made the wayward human heart, and gave us laws to govern it, against which we for ever struggle and rebel.

There are other deliriums besides those of the

sick-bed. Beatrice was delirious. Sometimes she tried to console herself with words she had heard Treherne himself quote; namely, that "all men behave unfairly to all women;" but it was a barren comfort. Sometimes rose up the vehement proud sentence of the poet:—

Come what may, I have been blest!

Come what would—let that false wife take him and add him to her long string of conquests, Beatrice *had* been his love and idol. It was only like dying a little sooner, and leaving him in this bad world full of evil snares and dreadful temptations.

But for the most part, she sank into despondency; the deeper for the increasing loneliness of her position. And about this time Beatrice had a revelation generally made later in life. She saw the alteration of her own beauty. Her features became drawn and wasted. Her face looked older than her years. Her brow contracted with

a nervous spasm from time to time, giving a weak pained look to her eyes. She gazed with alarm at the image reflected by her mirror. She was not experienced enough to know how a faded face may be loved beyond the bloom of all beauty; nor how the brightest of such bloom may fail to retain that love whose measure is not in the degree of attraction, but in the heart of the person loving. She only thought, "Will Montagu think me changed?" And Montagu did think her changed, and called in a doctor, who said it was "debility" that ailed her, and caused the nervous spasm in her brow; and that she wanted "more tone in the system," and he should order quinine.

Quinine was accordingly administered; and Beatrice received the mocking injunction to "keep herself quiet, and her mind cheerful, and go to bed early." And the more she fretted, and sickened, and wandered, and watched, the more Treherne absented himself from the dull tedium of Stratton Street. Naturally waiting till the

doctor had restored Beatrice; had calmed her nerves, and given "more tone to her system;" and so enabled her to be once more cheerful and chatty, and fit to sing and amuse her husband-lover, and not bore and perplex him as she had lately done by her varying moods, causeless tears, flushings and fatigues, compelling him in the midst of all his occupations to "wonder what the deuce ailed Beatrice."

And Beatrice being invalided, Montagu passed most of his evenings with Milly Nesdale. There he was sure of cheerfulness and flattery. There, no anxiety for love, nor repentance for error, clouded the careless hours of an intrigue carried on with triumphant cunning; but all combined, and was sedulously contrived to combine, to cheer, delight, and entertain him.

No wonder, poor fellow, he thought that pleasanter than being alone with the two beings that clogged his destiny at home: the drooping young mother full of troublesome repinings, and the

disagreeable large-eyed baby that was always having fits. It was a duty he owed to himself, to go where his spirits would be raised instead of being depressed: and it was a duty he accordingly fulfilled, with praiseworthy perseverance.

CHAPTER X.

THE STORM CLOUD.

"I CAN'T find your perscription nowhere, mum, though I 've been a 'unting and a 'unting this hour, and the boy is 'ere from the shop a wanting it, as the doctor 'ave ordered."

"Never mind, Nancy, I will get it myself. It must be in one of the blotting-books. Stay, I know where it must be: it was written in the sitting-room, not here, it must be left on my table. I was thinking of something else when Dr. Erne gave it me."

Poor Beatrice! She had indeed been thinking of something else: thinking how very silent and absorbed Montagu was, that particular afternoon:

how he had stood meditating and looking out on the extremely blank view from her windows: how instead of sitting down and chatting with her, as he generally did, he had then said, in a hurried, absent way, "Well, you are getting better now, Beatrice, are you not?" and drawing a chair to her writing-table, had scribbled a hasty note; sealed, folded, and put it in his pocket; and had gone out without a word more, good or bad.

Leaving her a prey to fantastic fancies and conjectures, such as haunted her now with incessant regularity; which she strove against in vain, and which led to nothing, except to those bursts of solitary weeping which went far to neutralise the effect of Dr. Erne's quinine, and during which her sister's name was sobbed out far oftener than Montagu's.

Mariana! Pure, calm, loving Mariana! Oh! for one half hour's rest, leaning the poor head on your tender arm: oh! for the sound of your meek prayers, and the sight of those large reverential eyes lifted to Heaven to bespeak compassion

"for all those who are in anyways afflicted or distressed."

There are hearts in whose goodness the grieving long to take refuge, as a child flees to its mother's arms. Such a heart lonely Beatrice remembered: but far away now was Mariana,—and far away the father who had forbidden his children even to speak his lost one's name.

With a languid step Beatrice passed from her bed-room to the sitting-room adjoining, and stooped over the table where the physician and Montagu had both written on the preceding evening. She lifted the gay little blotting-book (his last birthday present), and shook the leaves; but no prescription fell from between them.

Then she sat down, and carefully turned over each succeeding leaf, searching for the missing paper. As she did so, her eye was arrested by the traces of Treherne's handwriting, shining through the white blotting-paper. The name, the dreaded name, of Lady Nesdale, was there: it was the note he had written the day before,

while Dr. Erne was feeling her pulse, and prescribing for her! Some note — some appointment.

Will my female readers think it childish, or reasonable, that a sharper pang shot through the heart of Beatrice at the thought that it was written in her very presence; in the very book that had been his own gift to her? Insult and sacrilege to affection! Dizzy at first with the sight of those well-known characters, she shut her eyes and leaned back with a gasping sigh. Then she deliberately inspected what was clear enough to be read, in the half-impressed writing. The note had been so hurriedly scribbled, that nearly the whole had left some trace. The address stood out with startling clearness —

Lady Nesdale,

at Mrs. Myra Grey's,

Russell Square.

Three o'clock.

The rest was but partially visible, though it

left the tenor of the note only too intelligible. Beatrice spelt it out letter by letter:—

"Fulvia or no Fulvia, dearest, I . . . on the 4th. . . . Richmond . . . I . . . more like Anthony than Antinous . . . 'world well lost' for your love . . . . If . . . go on the water, from Castle Inn.

"Ever yours only,

"M. T.'

Ever yours only! Ever yours only! Ever yours! Edgar Poe's famous song of "The Raven" never beat with more sinister repetition than these words in the brain of the wretched Beatrice. And not even directed to Nesdale's house. No, he dared not do that. Directed to Myra Grey's. Myra Grey, as ready to receive her niece's notes and her niece's visitor, as formerly to invite Beatrice herself, and abandon her in the hour when she most needed protection. Oh! wicked, wicked people! And Beatrice wrung despairing hands.

Once more she looked at the silent proof of

perfidy; and taking the ivory paper-knife, cut out the fatal leaf, folded it, and locked it in her desk. Then she considered the date of this appointment. It was already the 1st of July. How should she live till the 4th, without betraying herself to Montagu?

She was not greatly tried. That evening he did not come at all. The morning of the next day he came in very hurriedly, and her increased illness prevented their exchanging many words. The evening of the 3rd he dined out, but came home comparatively early. She heard his step in the silent street, even before the latch-key turned in the lock, with that keen tension of the nerves common to persons in sickness and anxiety. She heard him pause hesitatingly at the door of her apartment, and set down the light on the table outside. Almost she hoped he would go up to his own rooms without noticing her. But after a moment, he knocked gently, and as gently entered, saying—

"I feared you might be asleep, dear; though

I came in early on purpose to take my chance of seeing you."

A sort of bold inspiration seemed to come into her heart as he spoke.

"I am not sleepy, but I am ill and very weary. I would like you to go now, and spend all to-morrow with me — Dr. Erne thinks I might venture to drive out; we might go somewhere into the country."

A strange wild light was in the wistful eyes, as clasping her hands on the arm of her easy-chair, she turned to look at Montagu. But he did not see that light. He was leaning his elbow on the table, the golden hair shining under the glow of the lamp, his downcast eyes shadowed by his hand. He was considering. Beatrice pressed her hand on her side; the pulse in her heart stood still, and beat again as he spoke.

"It is most unlucky," he said: "if I had known it this morning, I could have arranged differently; but Nesdale is going down to Eton to see his boys to-morrow: it is a great day with

them, and I promised — I engaged myself — to go also. I will take you anywhere you like, the day after."

"Is Lady Nesdale going, Montagu?"

"I don't know; she has not been very well lately, and the noise and fuss and crowd are not likely to suit her. Now, pray, Beatrice, do not begin again the old foolish questionings about that wretched little woman. You look as if you still held her to be a witch working spells against you,—or against me."

Beatrice attempted a sort of smile. "No, but I feel ill," she persisted.

He talked to her; he jested with her; he told her the news of the day, as far as it could interest her; he coaxed her with the words that used to be so dear, in the sweet familiar voice. Who shall tell the anguish of such times? The black lies, the vain vows, the false caresses; the phrases of re-assurance that are known to be merely phrases; whose comfort we would give our right hand to believe, and cannot. The bars of

hot steel that seem to bind and burn the heart as we listen to the same tones that once meant love and now mean treachery; the shadow of a thousand falsehoods flecking the light of long familiar eyes; the certainty of baseness beyond possibility of explanation; dreary knowledge which we can never more get rid of: all this fell like a curse on the hour when Beatrice sate listening to that lover-husband,—that substitute for home and joy and peace and all near ties — lying with all his might!

And then the preaching of others on such occasions,—their arguments echoed by our own struggling minds! What an unworthy object of love: see how base: mark what blasphemy in those oaths which the soul refuses to ratify! Give up the dream,— break the degrading chain,— choose anew,— choose better. So,— with their "turn again Whittington" jingle,— ring out the world's careless bells, with a vague promise of future hope and renewed trust.

Hope! as well bid the ship already wrecked

on the sands in sight of the ruined haven make sail for some better port. She lies among the driftweed and the rocks,—there is nothing left now, but to break up and float away into the measureless desolation of unknown seas.

A deep shivering sigh broke from Beatrice; and in spite of her silence and self-command, Treherne felt, with the instinct of those who live in great intimacy together, that "something was wrong." The conviction made him feel irritated and discontented. "Has anyone been poisoning your mind again with foolish stories, Beatrice?" he said, rather harshly.

A faint "No," mournfully spoken, rested on his ear, without satisfying his mind.

Those who are living in a tangle of falsehoods never know when or where the danger of discovery lies. What was the matter now? Could she have found out that his assertion as to the effect of a future marriage in legitimatising little Frank, was merely a monstrous pretence? She had seemed so melancholy lately. He watched

her discontentedly. He wanted to be believed, even though he knew he was lying. He wanted the lovely wistful eyes to look up in his face, full of hope and tenderness and vanishing doubt, as he had seen them do many a time at the close of former explanations. He wanted the bright smile that came like sunshine from behind a cloud; the clasp of the gentle arms closing fondly round him in answer to his embrace. There was something *passive* in Beatrice's manner which he had never yet seen, and which he could not endure. He bid her good night coldly and crossly, though he lingered with her hand in his. "I wish you would try to get well, Beatrice," were his final words; and they were spoken as if, in being unwell, she had done him a voluntary injury.

CHAPTER XI.

A DAY AT RICHMOND.

TOWARDS morning on the fatal 4th of July, Beatrice lay smiling in her sleep; dreaming a dream of such blessed comfort, so vivid and so real, that even when she woke, the joy of it surrounded her like a halo, and mingled with the rosy tints of the rising sun already peeping into her chamber.

She dreamed, as we often do, that the *real* was a dream. She remembered distinctly that Treherne had excused himself from driving out with her this day, because he was to go with Nesdale to see the boys at Eton; but she had dreamed that the finding traces in her blotting-book of a very dif-

ferent appointment, was all an illusion of her fancy — a result of illness and jealousy, and perturbation of mind.

The sense of relief, of joy; the gush of hope into its dried-up channels; the resolution to "be more reasonable" as to Treherne's friendship with Lady Nesdale, no words can describe. It was not till some minutes had elapsed, and that confused sense of returning from a different state of existence which we have when waking, settled and cleared into perfect consciousness, that a certain restlessness and tinge of doubt obscured this happiness. She gave the new feeling no pause. Quickly she rose, and passed like a white ghost from the inner to the outer chamber. She flung the shutter open; she seized her blotting-book: it was blank: he was true! But even while she laid it down, her eye fell on her desk: she ceased to dream,—she *remembered.* Slowly she drew the desk towards her, unlocked it, and lifted out the packet containing the leaves she had put away. It was there—it

was there—the SPECTRE LETTER, the certificate of treachery, the seal of a thousand lies.

There is, among the once hot ashes and lava of Herculaneum, the impression of a female form, smothered apparently in the death-throes of a vain attempt at escape. Where that young heart panted its last, the evidence of its agony remains; and of all the memorials of the buried city, it is the one which has appealed most impressively to the pity and wonder of succeeding generations. Such an agony, though not of death, it seemed to Beatrice that she suffered, when trust and hope lay for ever smothered in the ruin round her. She made her final struggle against conviction. She read and re-read the blotted sheet, trying so to twist words and fill in sentences that it might bear more harmless meaning. She tried to think that even since that note Treherne might have agreed to a different disposition of his day: but the effort was vain. The real was once more present; and with the warm light of the summer day came the feverish energy, the impulsive rash

determination, the sick strength that surprises those who are ignorant of its nature; and Beatrice, flushed and excited, prepared to seek confirmation of the worst, by going herself to Richmond.

Her presence was the only thing not planned for that eventful day. Nesdale went to see his boys as he intended, and to sleep at their tutor's. Milly, as *she* intended, spoke of the crowd and heat and fuss, with a little plaintive voice and headachy pressure of her two small hands on her brow; and such irresolute debating whether to go and "risk it all," or stay, that Nesdale was really obliged to advise her to remain; which was just what she had settled to do at all events, having already arranged her naïve little story for next day, of how she got better and took a quiet drive to Richmond with good aunt Myra,—and the good it did her head to feel the air and see the river,—and how Mr. Treherne also was there, dining with some friends, and met them in the garden (for Milly never concealed anything from her husband, oh, no never!), and how she re-

gretted after all that she did *not* go to Eton, and felt sure it would have done her no sort of harm!

She did not go down to Richmond *with* Treherne, that would have been "very imprudent," and Milly never was imprudent. Neither did she arrive exactly at the same time, as some neophytes and apprentices to discretion are apt to do; but sauntered into the garden of the Castle Inn at her own good pleasure, and came forward as slowly as if she did not see Montagu sitting on the low wall at the end of the terrace; stopping as she advanced to notice a little dog that was frisking over the lawn, and to point out some shrub to aunt Myra; and then meeting Treherne with the most ingenuous face of pleasant surprise, and acceding to his proposal to come out on the river for a little, with a sort of asking reference to aunt Myra, as if she were a young lady being chaperoned to a ball.

Beatrice was just in time to see them enter the boat. Agitated, inexperienced, and uncertain, she

had waited first in one shop then in another, afraid to remain in the street, till she saw Milly's carriage drive up to the door of the Castle Inn. Then she rapidly crossed the road and entered the garden; but alarmed lest Montagu should see her on the wide and empty lawn, and faint with the misery of the hour, she paused and sank on a bench. She remained, watching she knew not what, —the sky, the river, the boatmen,— listening as in a dream to the sweet sound of bells across the water, and wondering there was so much peace left in the world,—till the boat containing Treherne and Milly returned. A small river-steamer shot by at the same moment, leaving a swelling curl on the water, and swaying the boat round. Treherne jumped ashore to assist his companion out; and, light and lithe, Lady Nesdale stepped on the rocking benches of the boat with a laugh, as the surging river swept over the bank. She touched Montagu's shoulder with her tiny ungloved hand so lightly that her many rings seemed a shower of sparks; she set her foot for a second on his

bent knee; and was off the wet shore and on the stone steps of the garden terrace in a moment. Gathering her shawl from off his arm as she went laughing over the lawn, swift and graceful, rustling and gliding through the bushes and garden flowers, in her shining silks, chains, and bracelets, like a glittering snake.

Panting, breathless, giddy, and with a staggering step, Beatrice followed. She was more fearless now; her veil concealed her face, twilight was coming on, and numerous visitors crowded the garden; the chances of observation were lessened. As she neared Treherne and his companion, she heard Lady Nesdale say in her most winning tone, "Ah! if I could believe all your explanations, this day would seem like the dear days long ago."

And Montagu, drawing her hand within his arm in a fond and playful manner, replied: "Come in, my bright fairy queen, and do not let us waste the hours in captious disputing. Aunt Myra will join us when dinner is announced."

Further yet, in her desperation, Beatrice would

have followed, but that one of the waiters who had been watching this veiled wandering figure, so much less gaily dressed than the diners out, scattered over the lawn,—suddenly accosted her.

"I beg your pardon, Miss," he said, "but I thought you might be looking for your party. Which party do you belong to?"

Beatrice tried to answer, but failed. She looked vaguely up at the windows of the hotel, where lights were now sparkling in all directions. Which—ah! which—of those windows belonged to the room where that false wife feasted with the lover who dared not face fortune for his own wife's sake! Where had they vanished to? What should she do next?

Even while she looked, she was conscious that she herself was an object of notice; that the waiter who had first spoken to her, was pointing her out to a man who seemed his superior. That man also advanced towards her, and looking fixedly at her, said firmly, though not uncivilly—

"I really must ask your business, ma'am. We cannot" (and here he glanced slightly towards the very windows Beatrice had been watching)—"we cannot have parties intruded upon, by—by parties who are not invited. If you expect friends later, or if you would like some refreshment, we shall be happy to oblige you. But if not——"

He did not conclude the sentence, but Beatrice comprehended that the unspoken phrase could only mean, "if not, you had better go away."

What else in fact could she do? She was conscious in the midst of her anger and misery, of a strange jealous dread that if she suddenly intruded and made what is called "a scene," the result might be that Lady Nesdale never could return home, but must remain "for ever" with Montagu. She had a still stronger dread, sharpened by shame, of the exposure of Treherne's conduct and her own story, before this ignoble crowd of waiters and strangers. She had proved and known the worst, now she would go. She

attempted to murmur something about not meeting the friends she expected, and left the hotel. She was followed to the little hired carriage in which she had come, by the man who had spoken last to her; and as the impatient coachman, who had been waiting, shut the door upon her with an angry clap, she heard that person ask where he had brought her from, and on the reply being given, and her number in Stratton Street, the answer made with a half-laugh: —

"I thought so. Captain Treherne is here with another party. He's a gent that takes life easy, he does."

Shivering with shame, fear, and sorrow, crouching in a corner of the fly, as if she would bury herself from human view, Beatrice returned to town and waited — waited with the door of her apartment wide open, for the hour of Montagu's return.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NIGHT-WATCH.

THE hours which a married woman has at her disposal, are necessarily subject to some control, be she ever so bold and bad. She has her reputation to preserve; her family ties; and a home, to which, unless she chooses to appear to have eloped, she must sooner or later return.

Milly returned as late as possible, but she did return that night, from her sunset row on the river, her wicked dinner, and her moonlight drive. She had even thought it best "pour les bienséances," to take up Freiligrath and one of the young attachés of the French embassy, who had belonged to another dinner, and were in want of "a lift"

to town. The pink and white Russian was just about to offer, when Milly snapped them up; for she thought it looked better to seem to have a whole party for the barouche, than to bring Treherne back alone with her and aunt Myra.

She insisted on setting all her companions down in turn; and she peered curiously out at the light visible in the ground-floor windows of Treherne's house, not without a secret snigger of triumph over the clumsy beauty she had seen there. She had drawn a sort of half confession of his inconstancy from Treherne; but that practised lady-killer had so mixed his admissions with protestations of attachment to herself, of shame at his "delusion," and regret for an entanglement from which he was "on the point of freeing himself," that, on the whole, his fairy queen was better pleased than if he had been wholly true.

A dark shadow clouded one window. Beatrice was there. She saw him bid farewell to aunt Myra and Milly, and moved to her own door to meet him as he came in.

"My dear Beatrice! are you not yet in bed? Have you sat up on purpose to waylay me on my entrance?" He spoke with real or affected gaiety, and followed her into the sitting-room.

"Where have you been, Montagu? where have you passed the day?" she said, in a smothered voice.

"Where I said I would. Really, Beatrice, you grow very tiresome."

"You have not been to Eton. You have been with Lady Nesdale."

"If I have not been to Eton, it does not follow that I have been where your jealous crotchet always places me. Wherever I have been, I certainly am not likely to enjoy my return, if this is the sort of way you mean always to welcome me. How do you know I have not been to Eton?"

"Because"— Beatrice's voice choked with passion. She had returned at nine, and it was now past one in the morning. She had sat during those four intervening hours maddening over her own thoughts and recollections, and it

scarcely needed the tone of sneering and bravado in which Treherne spoke, to break the last thread of self-control.

"Because," she said, with bitter vehemence, "I was with you—close by you, when you said to that most vile and wicked woman, 'Come in, my fairy queen, and do not let us waste the hours in captious disputing.' I was there—I saw you—I heard you."

Treherne's passion rose to the level of her own. "You watched me!" he said, with inconceivable fierceness; "you *dared* to watch me! wretched girl, take heed what you do. You had better beware"—

But he was interrupted by Beatrice, wild with excitement, her eyes full of defiance and despair. "No," she exclaimed, "it is *you* who had best beware—*she* who had best beware; that fine lady, with her safe home, her deceived husband, and her betrayed children. What hinders that I warn HIM: that I say to him, Fool! there is not a day you have not borne patiently the

extremity of insult; the man you receive as a friend is your worst enemy; degradation and mockery are what he brings to your home; your wife and your friend are alike false! I will denounce her to Lord Nesdale. I will—I *will*, if I live to see to-morrow's sun!"

Montagu looked at her with amazement — she was like the Beatrice his imagination had pictured, when he first heard of her visit to his aunt, the Marchioness of Updown, and her declaration that she was not a mistress but a wife. In the midst of his bewilderment, the keen worldly instinct of the man shrewdly calculated what was to be done. He felt that, in common parlance, he had "gone too far." He entreated her to sit down; he bent over her, leaning his hand on the back of the easy-chair; he spoke in soft measured pitying tones —"Her husband would not believe you, my poor Beatrice; you would seem to him only to rave, as indeed you almost seem to do, to me. After all, what have I done? I knew this woman before I ever saw you—I had been"—

"You need not have denied the terms on which you had been with her—on which you still are. Oh Montagu! you swore by Frank's life—by my child's precious life! and it is all false."

"No, it is not all false—not false that I love you better than I ever loved any woman—better than I conceived it possible to love any woman. Beatrice, you don't know the world; all men, I am sorry to say, or most men, have these sort of adventures and *liaisons* to reproach themselves with. If you had not been so ill and so jealous, I might have spoken more about it, and tried to make you comprehend my position. You talk of going to her husband and denouncing her, or rather denouncing me. Will it be any satisfaction to you that Nesdale should shoot me through the head, or that I should shoot him? Will it be any great comfort to you, to throw Lady Nesdale entirely on me, as of course, must be the case, if she loses home, and fame, and name for my sake. You quite mistake the value of the speech you overheard; what is there in it? She is accus-

tomed to be flattered beyond bounds, and to be spoken to as if every man she knew, was a slave and an adorer. I might certainly have parted from her—'cut her,' as I suppose is your wish, but I must cut all my acquaintances if I am to avoid the chances of meeting her. I hate breakings, and scenes, and rows of all kinds. I am under considerable obligation to her uncles. One of them is in a great official position; and to the other I owe what chance I have of remaining in parliament. I suppose you don't wish to make me lose my seat in the House—you don't wish utterly to ruin me, because I have not been proof against the alluring coquetries of this woman of fashion."

"I am your wife, Montagu, and this woman is another man's wife. I have the same right to resent treachery, that her husband would have, could he know of her conduct."

"But I am not the first with whom her conduct has been such as to displease a husband. Why should you draw down ruin on me? I believe in

my conscience, she would only be proud of the row about her, and laugh at us both. Besides you exaggerate to yourself what she does; she is 'coquette et rien de plus,' at least, I firmly believe so. Oh! my dear, be reasonable—be reasonable. Life is difficult enough already, for me; especially since our lives were united. Do not teach me to regret that we ever came together."

"I *am* reasonable, Montagu. You swore by Frank's life that you were nothing to this woman: that she was nothing to you."

"Yes, because you worded it so absurdly, my sweet Beatrice, I could hardly help smiling. Nothing between us that might not be between friends and acquaintances—I might easily swear that."

"There is nothing to smile at, Montagu, in feeling, as I feel at this moment, that it is impossible to tell whether you speak the truth or not, or which of the women who receive your protestations, you really love."

"I really love *you*, my Beatrice, my own love,

my prize of life, won through storm and trouble! I was drawn into that intimacy which offends you so. Mrs. Myra Grey was always dinning in my ear how completely her niece was 'thrown away,' and everyone seemed determined we should meet. Milly herself was determined. I don't wish to abuse her, or seem more of a coxcomb than I am. Her obstinate rivalry with other women is one of the most curious points in her character, and at that time there was a very pretty Russian she was determined to outshine. Do not quarrel with me, Beatrice, for so poor a cause of jealousy."

He stooped as if to kiss her cheek; but she bent from him, and said in a low passionate tone: "We do not understand each other, Montagu. It is not *only* jealousy, nor *all* jealousy, though I admit that it is life and death to me to lose you. It is partly sorrow, and partly *horror* at the daily treachery which you, whom I once thought so noble and good, must daily practise in such a position. I cannot bear it,"—continued she vehe-

mently,—"I cannot bear to think of you, eating bread, shaking hands, riding out, going through all kindly courtesies of life with a man, who, if he really knew your feelings towards him, would by your own confession seek your life! You are saved from that danger (oh! Montagu, it maddens me while I say it), you are saved from that danger by daily petty cunning."

"Beatrice!" exclaimed Treherne.

But Beatrice was past controlling. "If," continued she, "you found your servant deliberately robbing you—rewarding your confidence by a system of false keys and cheating—you would think it only common justice that he should be prosecuted and transported. You are a gentleman-thief! You steal a treasure no one can replace when you steal affection. And that poor sinner, if indeed she truly loved you even with a sinful love, would she remain with him? No, she would leave position and wealth for you; she would leave that miserable husband, and you should scorn to betray him, poor weak fool, as

you should scorn to strike an unarmed man. And do you suppose that she, who is so cunning to him, to all around her, is not cunning to you? Are you so vain? Oh! I hope Heaven will punish her. I hope that——" but at the last words, Beatrice's voice, which had grown more husky and indistinct as each wild and voluble sentence was uttered, suddenly ceased; she rose, stretched out her arms, and fell forwards in a dead faint.

Treherne's vows of penitence; of never seeing Lady Nesdale again; of owning Beatrice for his wife before all the world; his prayers to her to have patience with him till she saw that world and its ways, were the first sounds that greeted her ears as consciousness returned. The first conscious sight was the expression of his eyes, full of perplexity and alarm, dilated and inquiring, looking down on her face as he held her clasped in his arms. Again and again he poured forth breathless scarcely intelligible phrases of comfort and re-assurance; and as he slowly released her from his embrace to place her leaning in the easy-chair,

he knelt at her feet saying, "I repent not having been perfectly frank with you, I repent it bitterly; will you not also repent the hard things you have said to me? I cannot bear to see you look so, Beatrice," continued he, as she gazed with a faint vacant stare in his appealing face. "You will be ill. I beseech you to have pity on yourself, if not on me. Where are those hyoscyamus draughts which were to give you rest? Take one of them, and I will sit here reading till you fall asleep. Let me get them: where are they?"

"Those draughts? I hate them, Montagu; they do not give me sleep or rest; they stupefy me. Don't you remember the last time I took them I could not be perfectly roused for a whole day afterwards? You have no idea how strange the sensation is: like floating in a pond full of summer lilies. Nothing seems to stir or to signify—"

"That sounds very pleasant and peaceful, Beatrice," said Treherne, with an attempt at a smile. "Do take one. If you sleep through to-morrow in consequence, so much the better.

Shut those displeased eyes" (and he gently kissed their heavy lids as he spoke), "and to-morrow you will be calmer and better."

He assisted her to rise from her chair; he poured the draught into the tiny Sèvres cup that stood ready on the mantelpiece. He embraced her again, and as the rich masses of her hair fell on his shoulder, he lifted a shining tress to his lips and said: "I would not give one hair of your head for all other temptations on earth. You know I would not, though you have dealt such hard measure to me to-night, Beatrice."

The weary eyes looked dreamily up at him; the blanched lips murmured something, even he could not make out whether in deprecation or forgiveness; then she said, "Help me to walk into the next room; softly, for Frank is sleeping!"

And then the night that had almost grown into morning, ceased to echo with those troubled voices.

A great stillness fell upon the house. Treherne waited, not reading, but staring at the half-closed folding-doors which divided the rooms,

with fixed stern eyes and compressed lips. After a while he rose, and softly crossed to the inner apartment to satisfy himself that she was indeed asleep. Then he returned, stood for a minute or two as if lost in thought, examined the hour by his own watch and the clock on the chimney-piece, and with a deep discontented sigh, lit his candle and slowly ascended the stairs to his own apartment.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COMPLETE LETTER-WRITER.

TREHERNE did not go to sleep; nor did he seek the aid of opiates. He was accustomed to late hours at parties, and at his club; a late riser and a late goer to bed. He took two or three turns up and down his own apartment, feeling extremely ill-used by Destiny, and extremely irritated with all the women he had ever made love to. His eye rested on the Venetian casket as he passed the third time. He glanced at it with sullen displeasure. Would to God all had ended *then*. What did that thought mean? Was he going to end it *now*?

Then he thought of Milly; thought of her in a

way that would have perfectly astonished that vain Fairy Queen if she could have known it. Thought of aunt Myra's cunning praises, who after all did not appear very fond of her; thought of the hackneyed phrase used by her, that dear Milly was "so thrown away" upon her husband.

Young lover, how do you know that any wife is "thrown away?" Her husband may love her with a truer, steadier, more disinterested love than you are able to give. Oh! but she so charming; and you are so charming also, that you must have a congenial mate, even if she be the wife of another man. The charming object of your passion is "*incomprise*;" her husband does not know how charming she is. She is too good for him. He thinks, poor goose, that her home and her children should content her. He is such a buzzard, he does not see the necessity of the "congenial soul." But the captain-lover does see how charming she is; and sees that he himself is the congenial soul; and both parties accordingly proceed on that assumption.

But the worst of it is, that even these two congenial souls may come to differ. The lady is apt to think that, charming once, she is charming for ever. Not at all. The greatest of all charms, in the eyes of unprincipled men, is novelty; and *that* charm the most charming must lose, even if all other attractions could remain stationary.

Treherne thought restlessly over all that *had* charmed him,—*was* charming him,—or might *yet* charm him,—and the effect of all these charmings and charmers on his present and future destiny. The result of his cogitations was, that at last he sat down,—slowly drawing towards him a very ornamental inkstand, and a taper-stand representing the Devil seated at the end of a tobacco leaf; gifts of Milly's when that favourite Parisian pattern was new. After thoughtfully examining the nib of his pen on his finger-nail, he proceeded to write,—in a fair even hand, though with a rapidity which did credit to his diplomatic profession,— a series of letters; namely, a short

note and a moderately long letter to Milly; a very long letter to General Pryce Perry; and a letter, of which, though brief, he made three copies, to Helen Wollingham. And as he sealed the last, with a sigh that merged in a weary yawn, he thought to himself that if Destiny continued to persecute him and put thorns in his path, he could at all events,—it being so late in the Session,—contrive to "pair off," as to his Parliamentary duties, with some member equally pressed by "urgent private business," and he would take the yacht round to Lisbon, and so to Malta. Mrs. Hammond was going to Malta with her Maltese merchant of a husband; and if she was not exactly a "congenial soul," she was at least a woman of very remarkable beauty, cheerful spirits, and considerable attraction in her own way, though she did now and then drop her h's, and use unfashionable English phrases spoken with a Northumbrian burr.

Then, having done all he could to propitiate Fate and turn events a little more in his own

favour, Treherne laid his golden hair down on the pleasant cool cambric pillow-case,— worked with his own initials in satin-stitch in a very dexterous way by the nimble fingers of his jealous Beatrice during the previous winter, when they had been "more comfortable" together,—and fell asleep.

As Milly got her note first in the morning, we will notice it first. It was a very harmless little note, to all appearance: it was honestly directed to her own house, and ran thus :—

"Dear Lady Nesdale,—The frames are nearly finished, but the man needs still your instructions as to carving the corners. Will you let me know when you have seen them?

"Yours truly,

"Montagu Treherne."

It was a harmless note, but Milly read it with her evil little face; having two faces, like the heathen Janus; one a soft (too soft) naïve face, with eyes ready to meet and caress yours

with sweet glances; and one a dark little face with averted eyes, whose half-closed lids gave out a sort of sinister glitter as she read.

For Milly knew that the harmless note meant that she was to seek more direct and alarming information at an obscure curiosity-shop, where she often went, though she did not often make any purchase of the owner; and that she was to learn something that could not be told even to aunt Myra.

She had just finished dressing when the note was brought. Nesdale had not yet returned from Eton. The two younger children were in the dressing-room. "Who will go with mamma for a morning walk?" "Me!" "Me!" said both the little voices. Milly cast a rapid scrutinising glance at them. "You have a little cold, my pretty," she said to the eldest; "so Pierrepoint must come with mamma." For Milly thought her pretty Myra was getting too old for chance expeditions. The last time she had told some one she thought mamma "would never have

done buying bonnets, she was so long at the milliner's!"

So Milly took the youngest; and of course needed no servant for her simple morning stroll.

And when she got to the curiosity-shop she asked for the drawings of the frames which were to be sent that morning; and taking the roll of paper from the boy who was waiting with them, drew from it a page in Italian, in which Treherne confessed his fear and expectation that Beatrice would sooner or later do something of the kind she had threatened; and he counselled Milly, very earnestly, to avoid the chance of so great a scandal.

"If," he said, "you can persuade Nesdale that one of the children wants sea air, or anything,—leave town at once. If you would go to Cannes (you know you spoke of visiting the Mediterranean), I would arrange to be there the greater part of the time. Believe me, much depends on your prudence in this conjuncture; if I could see you immediately, I could explain further."

Milly's eyes were still very sinister, but her mouth curled with a contemptuous defying smile that broke nearly to a laugh, as she finished the letter.

Then, without hurry, without discomposure, she laid the paper roll with a slight drawing on it before the carver, and said, "Will you send the lad back to Mr. Treherne, and say I am quite satisfied with the sketch; and that I don't stay to write about it, as I am going out to breakfast, with my aunt?"

Milly seldom put pen to paper when it might compromise her, and certainly would not have dreamed of doing so on an occasion like this: but the frame-carver looked askance at her while he promised that the lad should "go directly," for he knew perfectly well that between this fine lady and fine gentleman, his constant patrons, a correspondence was going on which would not do to be glazed and framed; though he could not read Italian, and perhaps if he could, would have thought it more profitable not to betray his knowledge.

The letter next in order of delivery was that to Helen Wollingham, who, unlike Lady Nesdale, instantly replied to it; neither weighing nor measuring the terms in which she did so, having, in spite of the fragile beauty of her appearance, a good deal of the blunt frankness of her aunt Dumpty in her composition. She tore Treherne's letter to atoms; the pink flush deepening to hectic on her delicate cheek as she did so. She opened the little old-fashioned desk she had kept treasures in ever since she was a child at Tenby. One light furtive kiss she gave to a small packet of letters tied up with a diamond copy of Milton, and then she resolutely and quietly penned her reply as follows:—

"I never was more amazed than on reading the letter I have just received from you; in which you ask me if I will fulfil the wishes of both our families and become your wife; and say that you have been hitherto deterred by the apparent indifference of my manner from venturing on

such a subject, but that Mrs. Myra Grey having 'accidentally' opened an angry letter from mamma to Mr. Grey, on family matters, and found therein that I had pleaded an attachment to *my cousin* as a reason for refusing two other suitors; declaring that if I did not marry *him*, I would never marry at all,—revealed this family secret to you, to comfort you in a mood of great depression of mind. That you are aware you have led but a light, worthless, erring life, but you 'hope to reform;' and, if my answer be favourable, you will go abroad for a space, and return more worthy of me."

"I will answer you categorically, as you have written. My answer will *not* be favourable; but it will at all events have the merit of entire frankness.

"I will not stoop to comment on the indelicacy and duplicity of Mrs. Myra Grey's conduct with respect to mamma's angry letter; nor will I accuse you—who have been all your life taught to think of no one's existence but your own—of a more

than common vanity in seeming to forget I have any other cousin besides yourself! It is perfectly true that when I refused the two successive offers mamma pressed upon me as suitable, I informed her of the reason. I was sorry to disappoint her; but I thought it better she should know the truth. I did say I would never marry, if I did not marry my cousin. That cousin is MAURICE LEWELLYN. I will be no man's wife, if not his; though miserable family matters have gone nigh to part us almost entirely. I would rather earn my bread and be Maurice Lewellyn's wife, than be the wife even of some good and worthy wealthy man. You may eventually be wealthy, but good and worthy you are not: nor are the errors you speak of, such light faults as might make a woman trust to the future to reclaim you. I am not afraid of being thought indelicate, Montagu, if I bluntly approach a subject supposed to be an improper one, and which my family refuse to discuss. *Where is Beatrice Brooke?* Where is that dear bright companion, whose merry conversation was

the joy of my invalided hours, and the memory of whose voice makes me sad now at all music? I overheard you and my aunt—(you spoke so passionately I could not choose but hear)—the night of the ball; when you swore, *before God and on the honour of a gentleman*, she was not your wife! I saw her—I am certain I saw her—that day we were all riding together in Hyde Park. Ill, and tired, and altered—but it was she—it was Beatrice! There are not two such faces in the world. And I know her: I did not talk with her day after day in our happy girlish holidays, to be persuaded she could be forward or vile in conduct; no, not even by Maurice's sorrowful 'Don't question me.' There is some dreadful mistake—some wicked mystery; and you, *you* hold the clue to it! How dare you write to me of love and marriage—to me who saw you day by day trying to win Beatrice? Repent, Montagu! You talk of 'a reformed life:' write to *her*—if you still know where she is); write to her good, gallant, unhappy father; write to Owen Brooke, poor lad, doing his true

duty on the other side of the Atlantic; write to *them* and tell them you will lead a better life. Write no more to me, unless to tell me *where is Beatrice.*

"HELEN WOLLINGHAM.

"P.S. I have destroyed your note to me, as you requested. You need not fear my ever mentioning your proposals."

A comfortable sort of a letter for a gentleman to get at breakfast time, after an agitated evening and a remarkably wakeful night! It did not improve the mood in which he went to meet Lady Nesdale at complaisant aunt Myra's: nor the mood in which he listened to that irate Fairy Queen's small stinging sneers about his timidity and her own courage, and her determination to remain in London, where she was "three note-quires deep," as she expressed it, in pleasant engagements.

She defied the chapter of accidents. She lamented, certainly, for *his* sake, any scandal from

a "low liaison;" but Nesdale would know how to judge *her* in the matter. She was sure he would be very sorry for her; and she feared he would be very angry,—perhaps unfairly,—but certainly angry with Treherne for being the cause of his wife's name being bandied about in consequence of attacks from some creature "out of the pale of society." She feared it would end somehow in Treherne seeing much less of Lord and Lady Nesdale.

For it was quite wonderful how the chains of Hymen seemed suddenly riveted with clamping irons in prudent Milly's mind. She was no longer Milly—she was no longer Fairy Queen — she was LADY NESDALE,—Lord Nesdale's reputable wife; with all sorts of fine connections, and intricate plaiting in and out of aristocratic and diplomatic help and upholding. The idea of its being possible that *she* could be wrecked by such a one as Beatrice! That was indeed a jest; and she treated it as such. Let that heavy

whale-boat come straining over the troubled sea of life after the smart little skiff, and see what comes of it; with what light puffs the favouring gales of Fortune will send her on. "Pleasure at the helm," even if Youth be no longer at the prow. Beatrice indeed! what folly!

Beatrice has slept very sound all that day. No storm reaches her. The sweet noble face seems sculptured in marble. The stirless lids of her eyes look like softly painted shadows. The mouth that spoke so vehemently, and quivered with the passion of the hour, parched with fever and excitement, wears the smile of perfect rest that belongs to childhood, and to the earliest phase of girlish beauty. It is Beatrice, but Beatrice transformed.

For the soothing opiate still lulls the action both of heart and brain; that little draught —poured out by the same hand which wrote all those strange letters—has magic power over her and her troubles; so that even when at

length towards evening she opens her eyes with a confused sweet sense of comfort, and of being tenderly watched, she closes them again and sleeps far into the next morning!

CHAPTER XIV.

SANS ADIEU.

NEXT morning she wakes to the sweet sound of bells, for it is the Sabbath; and from distance to distance, faint and far, loud and near, mingling and blending, the silver chimes call Christian people to peaceful prayers. The little lodging-house maid, Nancy, looking neat and bright in her Sunday gown, comes softly up to the bed-side with the breakfast tray, and tells her a gentleman is waiting to see her with a message from Mr. Treherne; but she is not to hurry on no account, for he is reading a paper in Mr. Treherne's room, and doesn't mind how long he waits, and Mr. Treherne isn't in his rooms, and isn't at

home; and how does she feel after her long sleep?

And Beatrice said she felt much better; and while she breakfasted and dressed, the sweet bells rang on; and the summer air came pleasantly across the flowers set in her opened window, and she mused, who could have come with a message, and thought it might perhaps be the owner of a pretty cottage which Treherne had spoken, some little time since, of hiring for a couple of months for her, for "change of air." And now perhaps, to coax and comfort her, and to make seeing Lady Nesdale impossible for a time, and so make it easier to break with that sinful woman in fulfilment of his promise, Treherne would go down himself to the cottage and stay there. It could only be some one on business; and she knew of nothing else. Perhaps Montagu had thought it best to save appearances by making her seem the tenant, and himself only a friend and visitor. She still felt a little heavy and confused from the effect of the opiate; she

would think no more of the matter, but, after a while, call the maid and desire her to tell the gentleman that she would receive him.

But even when the message was delivered, the gentleman seemed in no haste to obey it. He said, "Very well; he would come down directly; he knew his way; the servant need not wait;" and he looked again to the paper or letter he held in his hand. He read it through for the tenth time; sighing heavily. Then he walked to the door and opened it as if preparing to obey Beatrice's summons; closed the door, and again sat down; this time not reading the letter, but holding it crushed in his hand,—his one hand,—for the gentleman was stately old General Pryce Perry, the family friend of all Treherne's tribe of aunts and cousins, and more especially Montagu's friend, in right of devotion to his mother's memory.

The young diplomat had done skilfully when he commenced his letter to the General by invoking that mother's ever dear name; for all the indulgence the old soldier felt for the only son of his

first love, and all the conviction of woman's inconstancy which her jilting him could give; all the worldly experience of club life, London life, and dandy life; and all the calming down of sympathies and enthusiasm which may be expected in a man seventy years of age—scarcely availed to balance his amazement and distress at the task which that letter imposed on him! It ran thus:

"My very dear General,

"The love you bore my mother, whom I lost too young to remember, and of whom I only know that she seemed worthy to be an idol to *you*, must plead for me, and for your help to me, in an almost inextricable difficulty, out of which, if my mother's friend cannot take me, I do not really see what is to become of me; and, as you have helped me in every scrape from boyhood to manhood, I feel almost confident that on this last and most important occasion, you will not abandon me.

"I am truly ashamed to own, that I come once

more to ask you to get me out of an entanglement with a woman; remembering all my promises to you when you got Mary Macvicar set up in her milliner's shop, and restored her to respectable friends. But you know what women are, and I am a fool in their hands!

"The most difficult thing I have to say, is, *who* I desire your interference with: for I fear you will be greatly shocked when I tell you it is your old friend Captain Brooke's daughter, Beatrice. I am sure, you, who know me, will do me the justice of believing that the intention of wronging her never entered my mind in those days (would to God they could come again!) when you saw her at my Aunt Updown's ball.

"I struggled hard against my passion for her, and—forgive the boast—against her very openly avowed preference for me. I could not stem the tide of feeling, and I then resolved on marriage, however imprudent and unsatisfactory such a marriage might seem.

"My Uncle Caërlaverock's furious opposition

when making known to me the exact provisions of my grandfather's will,—and a series of circumstances,—so strange in their nature that it really seemed like fate when at last we became all in all to each other, without the sanction the Church alone can give to such ties,—combined to render all my previous resolutions vain.

"She has been living in the same house with me; though in different apartments, for I sedulously endeavoured, so far, to protect and preserve her from all open scandal. No friend of mine has ever seen her there. I have even combated her own imprudence in that one respect, preventing her from driving or walking where she might be recognised by any of the very few persons whom she formerly met.

"At first, I still clung to the idea, that sooner or later, in spite of the awkwardness of our position, my wish for a marriage would be fulfilled. But I confess, that as I became more acquainted with the vehemence and wildness of her character,

I thought her less fitted for the position of my wife.

"If it were possible to get her father to receive her again, I am certain that in that out-of-the-way corner of the world where they live—at Tenby, the whole story of her absence might be hushed up and forgotten. She is very young, and you know how one may 'live down' gossip of all kinds; and, indeed, that would oftener be the case, if families were not so deuced fond of proclaiming their own scandals, and so turning private memoirs into public records.

"I understand from Beatrice that her father forbid even her name to be mentioned before him. Can anything be harsher? or more likely to encourage that barking Cerberus 'the World' to condemn one who, however faulty or unfortunate, *he*, at least, ought to support by every means in his power, and shield from open shame?

"She has,—I regret to say,—an infant child: a boy: and what I would implore you to do, my dear General, is to arrange for the best interests

of both mother and child (as far as my means present or prospective will admit), as soon as you shall have informed her that I have left England.

"I shall have left when you get this. I thought it better to leave without even seeing *you*, for the most painful discussions could not have altered what must now be. I had not the heart to write to her: these things must be done with a wrench. I have suffered more in the past night, than years of wavering could have made me endure. Above all, make her understand that I am *gone*; and gone for an indefinite period. I have the yacht down at Plymouth, and shall perhaps touch at Lisbon, but I wish you not even to say so much. I leave no address—letters would only disturb and make me suffer; when I see you again, we can talk it all over.

"My present income is small, but I should think you could find me some means of raising money if requisite. The boy, they tell me, is quite unlikely to live; and no one who reflects on his position can wish it, poor little fellow! but the

mother cannot see it in this light. The care of him may perhaps prevent her giving way so much when she learns my departure; but he is a sad obstacle to her reunion with her family, and I do not think worlds would tempt her to agree to the only rational course she could take, which would be to leave him in other hands. If this *could* be managed—but I know it is a vain wish. Her beauty was very great; but her vehemence, her jealousy, and a certain obstinacy in points such as the above, made life very difficult with her.

"I have not said a word to you yet about Lady Nesdale, and there is little to say. She has behaved most heartlessly, as those sort of women always do behave. Still if you can soothe her in any conversation about me, do. I have an especial repugnance to quarrel with her, and she might do me very serious mischief if she took to being my foe instead of my friend.

"I really am quite worn out with the crowded multiplicity of vexations that have come upon me

lately. I know you will say they have come by my own fault, but one thing leads to another, and I have been borne onwards blindly.

"You will find poor Beatrice under the impression that our future possible marriage would have legitimatised her babe. I ought to have undeceived her as to this matter; but her excessive vehemence made me glad, as they say, of 'anything for a quiet life.' The sooner she is now made aware that by the law of England this would be impossible, though the Scotch law permits it, the better for her and for me. When she knows that our marriage, had it taken place, would have left little Frank in a most anomalous position, she may be more reconciled to her lot. She once told me that, dearly as she loved me, she looked forward to our wedding-day a thousand times more for Frank than for herself. I never saw a woman so fond of a child. But she is made up of extremes.

"And now, my dear General, that I have unburthened my heart to you, what shall I say more?

Only that I rely with inexpressible hope upon your doing what I wish. I will do anything on earth for Beatrice, except marry her, or remain at present in England. If you knew how I pant for freedom, how necessary some great change is to me after these months of worry, you would pity me. Don't keep all your pity for Beatrice. She is a light-hearted being, and if I know anything of woman, after the first pang of affection and resentment is over, she will rise to her own natural cheerfulness, as grass rises that has been rolled. Especially if the reunion I suggest, between her and her family, can be accomplished.

"To your prudence and kindness, I leave all; and great will be my joy and gratitude on finding that the firm friend of my boyhood has extricated me from the worst 'mauvais pas' in which I was ever placed by my own folly.

"If I hear from you that all has gone well when I touch at Lisbon, I think I shall venture on a visit to my Uncle Caërlaverock; but all my

movements are 'dans le vague.' I have been so chained down by circumstances, that it is a positive relief to me to say, I don't know what is to become of me to-morrow. I have not a plan beyond the present hour.

"Do not mind if Beatrice seems a little impetuous and passionate at first. A few kind sentences will generally alter her mood, and she will be as tender as she was proud. Rest much on her bearing up for the boy's sake; and impress upon her that though I have considered this parting better than the struggle we were making against possibilities,—I will for ever befriend her in any way that lies in my power. I think her health will not suffer. She is very strong, and has borne much worry lately, without sinking as many more delicate women would have done. You, who have so much tact, will know how to deal even with her wayward nature. We must all submit to destiny; all have bitter cups to swallow. I wish poor Beatrice was cast more in the mould of those who acquiesce in the

proverb, 'Le vin est tiré, il faut le boire.' It is not without a pang that I seal this letter, knowing it to be the sentence of our separation.

"Ever yours most gratefully and affectionately,

"MONTAGU TREHERNE."

When General Pryce Perry had read through this farrago of verbose selfish phrases, he did not take the view that might be supposed. He was a gentleman and a soldier, but he was a gentleman with very strong prejudices, and a soldier's life is not exactly one which teaches respect for the fair sex. He had seen but two sorts of women; the icy courtliness and self-possession of those in "good society," and the merriment of race-going and opera-going friends in "bad society."

He recollected thinking Beatrice rather forward and independent at the Marchioness's ball; because he had found her walking about, looking at the pictures in an inner room, instead of being properly huddled up with the sheep-like flock

that crowded after each other, and jammed each other against the doorways and balustrades of the gilded apartments. He had also seen the June rose given to Montagu; the kiss impressed on the hand that gave it; and the intense, eager, undoubting look of love that accompanied the gift, and shone full in the light of the lamps of the doorway as she departed!

General Perry tried to steel his heart against Beatrice. He thought she must have been extremely ill-disposed to have deceived such a father as he knew Brooke to be. He had heard all sorts of abuse of her from Lady Eudocia Wollingham, and what a bad companion she had turned out, for his lovely favourite Helen Wollingham. In fact, the brief of his position was that he must either think his "dearest boy," as he still called Treherne, the basest and most heartless of men, or settle in his own mind that Beatrice was a vixen and a wanton. He therefore adopted the latter view.

And a vixen he certainly thought her, when the

dreaded interview took place. At first he met with the unexpected difficulty of Beatrice's utter incredulity as to the truth of his message. She smiled—she shook her head—she patted her child's white shoulder as he sat on her knee—she said Treherne had sent him to frighten her into better behaviour—she resisted the truth, till resistance was no longer possible. Then, when convinced that he really was breaking to her some new dreadful phase in her life, she passed to the wildest frenzy of reproach to him personally, for being the bearer of such tidings; she laid her child (almost tossed it, as it seemed to the General) on the sick couch from which she had risen, and declaimed against the baseness and treachery of his nature; and how such old men as he, corrupted the generous nature of others; and how Treherne would never have left her, if he, the friend and tool of his haughty aunts, had not instigated him; and how he never would have had the heart to tell her, but that he found this serpent-tongue to speak for him. She said she would claim Treherne

" before man and heaven;" she positively stamped her foot as she bade the old soldier begone, and not insult her farther by his presence; and finally, --becoming apparently suddenly conscious of the ceaseless cries of little Frank, who wailed as all young children do at stormy speaking among their elders,—she snatched him up as passionately as she had laid him down; looking like a pale angry Medea. And while yet the General seemed hardly to make up his mind whether some tragedy of the same kind as that classic fury's might not take place, she strained the boy hard to her breast, looked imploringly up to Heaven, and dropping back in her chair burst into sobbing tears.

Under that shower (to which he would greatly have preferred a shower of bullets, had he been given his choice) the General beat a rapid retreat, incensed and alienated; thinking Beatrice wanting in dignity, modesty, and proper conduct, and resolving to communicate anything else he had to say to her, in writing.

But before the hot afternoon had waned away, a little note recalled him: it said—

"Forgive my violence—I want to ask you one question—only one—and then I will give you no more trouble. I am very miserable—do come back to me.

"BEATRICE TREHERNE."

He did go back to hear her one question; and his heart sank as he saw her. Her anguish was real—her submission was real—the intense appeal of her eyes haunted him for days afterwards!

She had found a glimmer of hope in the darkness, a guiding light to lead her from despair. She believed—she knew—that all was as he had said; that Montagu was gone; gone of his own free will, and had commissioned General Perry to tell her so. But was it not done to punish and to try her? It could not be for ever? He could not mean to forsake her utterly? It was but the night before, he had said that a single hair of her

head was dearer to him than all else upon earth; that could not be a pretence, surely? He was tried by — by circumstances that perhaps the General knew? and again Beatrice's lifted eyes seemed to smite him with a sword-wound. She had been very impatient—the General had seen how impatient she could be—(and as she said this, Beatrice tried for a miserable little smile); but she repented that: "I repent it ALL,—General Perry! the threats, the jealousy; I lead such a lonely life; that must be my excuse. So let this pain end, and bid him return. He cannot really have left even you ignorant of his address? He must wish to hear of me—of you—of all friends. Will you write, dear General Perry? Will you? For poor little Frank's sake,—not for mine?"

Ah! Beatrice, if your pleading voice could have enabled the bewildered old soldier to obey, as well as pity you, Treherne would have heard of you that hour! But it was not to be; and he convinced her it could not be. What else he had

to say, seemed only half listened to. The look of pain and anger, mixed with a certain wonder, returned as he spoke of income and help. But there was no open protest; nothing beyond a sort of shudder, and negative movement of the head. She sat very still; no more weeping; no more reproach. Her countenance was more as if she were half-stupefied, but making an effort to listen and thoroughly comprehend. Only when he rose to go—having said all that Treherne had suggested, and having "above all" made her comprehend the latter was "*gone*, and gone for an indefinite period," which might be years—she put out her hand in token of farewell, without rising from her chair; and as its damp chill touch met the General's, her eyes also met his,—with a vague imploring stare like that of a person drowning.

General Perry's last thought as he left her, was: "Her father! poor thing: her father! I am certain I could intercede so as to show Brooke she deserved to be taken back home. She must be got back to her father."

But these reunions are more easily hoped than effected. Beatrice knew nothing of the plan; and if she had, would not perhaps have believed in its success; and before General Perry had any reply from Tenby,—where Captain Brooke was then lying "very ill and much broken" as Mariana expressed it,—his unhappy daughter had left Stratton Street.

CHAPTER XV

FORSAKEN.

EVEN after General Perry's visit was over, Beatrice did not weep afresh. She felt as we often do feel in moments of overwhelming misery,—benumbed; as if it were all happening to some one else, far away. She was merely conscious that there was no step for her to take; nothing to be done. The day but one previous, had been a day of active interference with destiny. How wildly had her heart beat, going down to Richmond, to watch for Lady Nesdale. How strained and eager had her listening been at night for the wheels that brought him tardily back, and the click of the latch-key turning lightly in the door. No need

now to listen. No need now to wait. The fine warm summer Sunday, with its thousands of well-dressed pedestrians and loungers in parks and gardens, passed slowly away. The sun sent a rosier beam over the balcony flowers before leaving the final leaden hue proper to a London twilight. That sun was shining for them both; she, suffocated and sickening with pain in her lonely room; and he, sailing over the fresh waves with a pleasant wind filling the sails, and the ripple making music in his ear. He was gone to be free—to forget her; while she remained thus chained down, by fetters more heavy than lead, to her fatherless child and her undeserved disgrace.

Towards the dim fall of evening, the landlady, looking handsome, flushed, and tired, opened the door with a doubtfully enquiring compassionate smile. "Have you had nothing? Will you take nothing?" she said; but the tone was of the wish to help,—and the knowledge that help and sympathy were needed.

Beatrice had not heard the same tone since the

miserable night when her child was born, and kindly Mrs. Laing watched over her. She turned, and her eyes filled with tears, even while fixing with a certain scrutiny on the woman. Did she know Treherne was gone? Did she know Beatrice was forsaken?

She was not left long in suspense. After walking to Frank's white cot, and then to the window,—and then back to the table, where she irresolutely folded and dropped again, a corner of the cover, —Mrs. Laing returned and stood by Beatrice, saying in a low voice, "I know what has happened; Captain Treherne has paid his apartment, and given me notice he will not want it again; and General Perry sent for me this afternoon and explained that he hoped I would take every care of you till—till—something could be settled."

Beatrice looked up. She said in a hoarse whisper, "I too am going: I thank you for the many proofs of your good-will; and shall always remember them. I am going away to-morrow."

"Gracious! Mrs. Bertram, do not think of such a

thing," said the landlady hastily. "The gentleman has behaved very ill, as gentlemen will; but you have friends, I am sure; genteel friends; and the gentleman who sent for me yesterday (General Perry it was), I 'm sure he seemed sorry enough, and a good fatherly gentleman as can be."

She put her hand on the back of the chair where Beatrice sat, and leaned over her: "I will tell you a secret, Mrs. Bertram, and one I thought never to own to, only I do feel such a wish to comfort you! *I* was young once, and had a friend as deceived me; cost me tears enough I can tell you; but do you think I was to go on fretting for ever about him? No; nor about any man. They're none of them much good. No, I made up my mind as you must do you must exert yourself."

"Mrs. Laing," said Beatrice, starting so suddenly that the woman's hand dropped at her side, "that is it; that is what I was thinking; I must exert myself." She looked up. The bold, handsome, not unkindly eyes, were watching her with an expression instinctively repugnant to

Beatrice. They seemed reading her by the light of some dreadful torch. Beatrice sighed and shrank away: then she added resolutely, "And I *will* exert myself, for my dear boy's sake. I will not sink; nor will I be dependent on——" she could not speak his name—"on pity for past days. I will teach music and drawing. I know I am a good musician. I know my drawings are as good as many an artist's. It is only humbling myself a little, and you who know the names of so many families——"

"La! Mrs. Bertram, my dear young lady, how you do run on! You can't! It's impossible!"

"Not at all impossible, Mrs. Laing; I will do it, and do it courageously!"

"Dear me; but you know you can't go teaching in families; because—because to do that, you know, *you must have a character.*"

The wild look with which Beatrice confronted the speaker, Mrs. Laing had never seen but once, and that in a girl who had one night rushed past

her, climbed the parapet of Westminster Bridge, and drowned herself. The recollection unnerved the compassionate landlady; she said hurriedly, "Now don't look so; pray don't; keep quiet for a week or two. You shan't be beholden to Mr. Treherne, nor to the General, nor no one. I've gone through it all, and I won't press you for the rent. They turned me out, I remember, into the street; but I've seen them in the Bankruptcy Court since then. You consider," continued she, venturing to take one of Beatrice's passive hands, "you must be fed, you know; and feed the boy; and gentlemen as call themselves gentlemen, always do help after a lady's known 'em as you've known Mr. Treherne."

And still while she spoke, she watched Beatrice, and wondered what would become of her. Would she—*could* she fall, as she had seen others fall? —a struggle, and then cheerfulness; and then another choice; and another phase of misery, and another, till at length she was a lost degraded creature? or would she indeed make her resolute

stand after the first lapse (for Mrs. Laing knew nothing of Beatrice's true history and supposed marriage), and honestly "exert herself" as she proposed to do, for her child's sake?

And while she watched and mused, Beatrice was conscious of the watching, and uneasy under it; and in spite of the anxious pity of Mrs. Laing's countenance, she felt dishonoured and lost in the comparison made,—and the equality which her forsaken condition seemed in her companion's eyes to establish between them!

And through the sleepless night, the thought glared at her through the darkness, that now she could never be really Treherne's wife. And the sweet letter of young midshipman Owen, promising always to be "proud of her,"—and the prayers of the good holy Mariana,—and the angry shame of the alienated father,—closed round her in disturbed circles; widening and widening as the wreck of hope, and fame, and good name, sank deeper and deeper, and the whirlpool settled to calm. And in the dawn her snatch of sleep was

broken by a dreadful dream; for she thought her father appeared to her, and that she knew it was not a living man but a ghost, and while she trembled, it said "I have come to curse you for shaming us all: I did not curse you in life, because the curse of an embodied spirit has less power, but a disembodied spirit has a curse that can turn all life to withering." And then with a shriek so wild that it rang through the house, she woke and found Mrs. Laing by her. "My dear Mrs. Bertram," she said, "you should not scream so; it is lucky there were no other lodgers to hear you."

But neither the miserable evening, nor the horrible night, conquered Beatrice. The morning found her resolute

To suffer and be strong.

She had that excited strength and strange calmness which comes to those who are nursing dying friends, or sharing sorrow with the helpless, and who "break down afterwards" it may be, but for

a time think, and act, and speak, as if no arrow pierced, no weight oppressed them.

She chose carefully the best of her sketches and water-colour drawings, not even sparing those desert scenes she so well remembered. She took a volume of verses she had set to simple melodies and sung many a day with Helen Wollingham and Maurice. She took the rich set of coral which she had worn the night Treherne had called her his "Rose of June,"—and with these small wares she crossed St. James's Park, out by Spring Gardens and the lodging at Charing Cross, and so up the Strand,—and in her own inexperienced method endeavoured to find purchasers among the music-sellers, and picture dealers, and jewellers.

The coral was easily parted with; without bargaining; at a price so infinitely beneath its value that her readiness to give it up inspired the buyer with a temporary hesitation to take it, lest it should have been stolen. The jewels of her brain, her poetry and music, were not so successful

as the work of the sea-worm. Some publishers scouted the idea of printing amateur compositions at all; some would print them and "give them a chance." Some "would look them over and let her know whether any would suit," in a few days; but in no one instance did any publisher consent "to set a price and pay her for them."

The drawings fared little better; those she believed were worth many guineas, and which indeed were truly worth it, sold for a few shillings. Some were not wanted at all. Some, she was told as if it were a favour, would "be allowed" to remain in the window, to be faded by the sun, handled by careless non-purchasers, spotted by summer flies, and returned when the window seemed to require "a change of decoration and scenery" to attract passers-by.

Bitter disappointment thrilled through her heart; but she walked resolutely on, for beyond all this petty bargaining for the produce of her talents, she had a great plan; no less than the plan of visiting Mr. Grey at his chambers

and of obtaining from him,—who knew her and her story,—such a recommendation as would enable her to overcome the bar to her teaching in respectable families; namely, "the want of character."

CHAPTER XVI.

BEATRICE WISHES TO EARN HER OWN BREAD.

BEATRICE was nearly breathless with the speed with which, in her nervous eagerness, she had traversed the space between the last shop where she had offered her drawings, and the chambers of Mr. Grey in the great square of Lincoln's Inn. She had time, however, to compose herself, for she had to wait till a client who was with him departed; and as his visitor brushed against her in the dark outer chamber where she was seated, and made a hasty apology without pausing or recognising her, she saw it was General Pryce Perry.

A slight shade of cold surprise was visible on the finely cut features of the gentlemanlike solicitor.

"Miss Brooke!" he said, "I did not expect to see you, but be seated. I cannot wonder that you are anxious to know how matters are to be arranged; but the position of Mr. Treherne's affairs is a little difficult. General Perry has, however, explained all his wishes to me, and you may rely on every effort being made to realise them."

Brief as this sentence was, Beatrice had once or twice tried to interrupt it; but her mouth seemed too parched for utterance. At length, with an effort, and in a hoarse vehement tone, she said: "I do not come here to speak about Mr. Treherne, but about myself. I had not the least idea, Mr. Grey, that you were employed in any matter concerning me; but that fact will at least spare me many painful explanations. You, who know how the case really stands and how deceived I have been, will surely assist me."

Now this speech, and the history of the past which Beatrice proceeded to give with that rambling fluency which all women, even very intelligent women, employ in endeavouring to

explain themselves on matters of business, did not at all predispose Mr. Grey in her favour. In the first place he disbelieved the preamble; he did not believe Beatrice had no idea he would be employed in arranging matters, for who was likely to arrange them but the family solicitor; and he never considered that women rarely know how business is arranged, or by whom. Then as to the story, first of her mock-marriage in the Desert, and secondly, her obstinate expectation of an eventual marriage, and consequent legitimatising of her son—he could scarcely repress a scornful smile at her supposing his credulity so boundless as to "swallow" such assertions made by a grown-up woman.

Physicians see the best side of human nature, and for the most part take a favourable view of human nature; but lawyers see the worst side, and judge accordingly. Mr. Grey listened with increasing severity and disapprobation. Her occasional tears did not touch him; her appealing looks, from time to time, when urging some

especial point, only irritated him. This was neither a time nor place for such coquetry. His wife and Milly had appealing eyes at command. He did not like such eyes. Therefore he sat stiff and stern; looking as on days when Mrs. Myra vainly attempted to coax from him some extra supply, by saying with the prettiest side of *her* Janus face, "Oh! do give way; you are such a granite man!"

But when at last Beatrice's fluent tearful arguments wound up in the astonishing climax that she expected him to protect and recommend her, so that she might obtain teaching and standing ground in respectable families, he very bluntly interrupted her with "Good God, Miss Brooke, you will excuse me, but I must wonder at your thinking such a thing possible! I will not wound you by any unnecessary comments, nor express any opinion of the truth or falsehood of the narrative you have detailed to me; because its truth or falsehood can have no material bearing on the result. I will merely observe that all I *know*, and can personally vouch for, is likely

to be detrimental to you—not serviceable. The great facility with which you left safe and decent protection at Venice, to accompany that passionate and wayward young man; the great acuteness (unusual at your age) with which you contrived to blind your father to the true state of the case, are patent facts that tell greatly against you. In short, I am compelled to refuse your request. I do so with pain; but I do so at once, and decidedly. I am a father myself. I will do as I would be done by; and I will not be dishonest enough to say to any family that I think you an advisable and trustworthy teacher for their young daughters, when the reverse is my opinion. I confess, I think you a most dangerous person for any family to harbour; and Mrs. Grey has expressed to me the same views when we have been discussing this most unfortunate affair, in which I at first blamed *her*, till she explained how greatly she was herself deceived in you. I very earnestly counsel you to accept the settlement which is usual in these cases. It is small—but will be safely secured to

you, and to the offspring of this unhappy connection. I will look through the papers General Perry left, and inform you of the result. Did you walk here, or have you a carriage? Allow me to see you to the door at least of my office. Good morning."

Flaming sword, flaming sword of the world's disapprobation, turning every way—who is to stand against your power? Swiftly, almost wildly, Beatrice descended the dark stone staircase; up and down which so many anxious hearts, so many half-ruined men, so many keen and plodding lawyers, daily went on their various errands. Her eyes mechanically read—her lips mechanically murmured—the names painted in groups at the doors of chambers on the different landing-places. As she emerged into the open sunshine, she was startled into consciousness by the sight of Mrs. Myra Grey; busy with a scheme for persuading her "granite man" to allow her to take shares in an Indian railway just planned. They met, face to face. Beatrice pale,

wild, and weary. Mrs. Myra with her white blonde veil dropped over the tinted skin and the liquid eyes, looking very little older through that soft mist than her niece Lady Nesdale, and very like her. *Almost* the parched lips of forsaken Beatrice had uttered in a tone of passionate expostulation, "Oh! Mrs. Grey," when she became instinctively aware that her quondam chaperon intended to cut her. There was no pretence of not knowing—not recognising. No affectation of averted eyes, or of that gaze that sees beyond the object standing close to you. It was the calm overlooking of a person resolved no longer to acknowledge an acquaintance; the resolved crush, of woman standing to woman fallen,—or held to be fallen. There was a slight gathering in of her drapery, as if to imply, "I hope you'll contrive to pass me without contaminating my dress by touching me," and then they had shot by each other like sailing barks at sea. Beatrice bewildered, —feeling something of the vague horror which is felt in dreams, under the burden of inexplicable

desertions and flittings to and fro of familiar forms that vanish into darkness; and Myra with a sort of smile upon her thin lips; for she had been scolded by her husband once—once she had been scolded on Beatrice's account—and the power to smite her was pleasant.

But there was nothing passive about Beatrice. Impulse and action were the mainsprings of her energetic nature. Too much of impulse; too much of action; too much of passion. A proud quiver of the mouth as she looked back to the dark doorway and grey stone staircase up which the bright fringe of the Dacca-embroidered shawl was trailing; a flash of the radiant eyes to Heaven, as if in mute appeal against the injustice of earth; and Beatrice's next thought was—what was next *to be done*. It could not be, that with all her talents and all her good-will to turn those talents to account for little Frank's sake—for the sake of the poor little thing that did not know or comprehend the tragedy of his life—it could not be that she could do *nothing*! The proud mouth

softened and trembled. "Frank, my blessed Frank!" was passionately murmured. With the sound of the name came the memory of the past; of that troubled day when he was born, and of the night previous,—when Maurice Lewellyn met her at Treherne's lodgings.

Maurice Lewellyn!

Here was a friend who was noble and good. Would he too spurn the notion of assisting her? of merely "putting her in a way to get her bread," as the old familiar phrase has it? She had seen him so full of Christian pity even to those he *knew* were sinners. She had seen him so generous of time and thought to those he had proved to be thankless. She had seen him so credulous of good, amid the most clamorous persuasions to believe the worst. In the old days—the dear lost days at Tenby—when he loved her half-sister; when he, and she, and Mariana, stood among the great white rose-bushes in the glory of early summer, watching the white gulls dip their slant wings in the waves; the happy

stillness only broken by cheerful and familiar voices, and laughter fresh and sudden as the dash of that dancing sea! What crowding countless instances,—of his unselfish activity, his noble and tender dealing with the wretched among his fellow-men,—chased each other even now over her mind, like the swift rippling of the wind-swept waters which undulated to that happy shore!

Yes, she would venture it. She would go to *him*. He too was a lawyer; but not like Mr. Grey, a stranger and prejudiced against her. She would tell him all. He would believe her. He would approve of her determination to avoid a base dependence by honest toil. He would help her.

HELP! it is a lovely word: and it should be an awful reflection that God gives the working of its solemn spell to almost every one on earth; that there is scarcely a human being, however lowly, who at some time, in some way, and on some occasion, has not power to help a fellow-creature. And yet so little done! and yet so often called for, yearned for, prayed for—in vain!

"Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these, ye did it unto Me." Is it only for the simpler parable of animal hunger and imprisonment and thirst, that we can read this text? Does the soul never hunger after pity, or thirst to be believed? Has the heart no dungeon bars, shutting it in among inextricable despairs and vain unsatisfied longings; dreaming in its fitful sleep of voices that shall say,—"Be patient yet; friends strive for you; the Dawn cometh?"

Beatrice made sure of help from Maurice Lewellyn. She was new to sorrow; she made very sure of help. On to the Temple, from Lincoln's Inn! From the baffled hope to the new one; from the scornful stranger to the pitying friend.

She passed the Temple gateway; inquired the way to his chambers, and climbed those other stairs. Some little time elapsed before the well-secured door was opened by a middle-aged female, on whose dress and whole appearance the word "respectable" seemed legibly written. Apparently she did not think that word applied to the

flushed and trembling visitor; for after hastily scanning her from head to foot, she exclaimed, "Good gracious, Miss—what do *you* want here?"

"I want Mr. Lewellyn: I want very much to speak to him; even if he is busy, I am sure he would see me," said Beatrice, with breathless rapidity; laying her hand against the oak door as if she feared its being closed against her.

"Mr. Lewellyn is away; but even if he were at home, he would not see people—"of your sort" the woman was about to add, but changed it to "people who have no appointment with him."

"Is he really away? are you sure? is it for long? Oh! do not say he is away if it is not true," and Beatrice clasped her hands.

"He *is* away; he is abroad—gone to foreign parts for a holiday, to see his father and mother," replied the woman, a dawn of puzzled compassion rising in her eyes: "but if your things have been seized, or you're in some scrape as needs a

lawyer, there's Mr. Henderson up next stair, or Mr. Shale."

Beatrice only shook her head and turned away; wistfully and stupidly looking down the dark gulf of the descending steps, and up the dark hollow above her head, as if seeking there for the help she had not found. Then slowly and wearily she wandered out into the Temple Gardens.

This time she paused to think. She stood by the low wall looking at the river as it passed her: now dull and covered with scum and rubbish—now a little clearer—but always on, on, on, with its unreturning motion; quieting, and at the same time seeming to stupefy, her brain. Some poor little drowned animal floated by, its rounded side gleaming above the water-line; then a basket lost overboard from some boat; rags, paper, outside leaves of green vegetables; straw from the packages along some wharf pieces of worn and worm-eaten timber; a fragment of bright-coloured ribbon, or a flower carried off by the breeze; dead fish,—refuse from market, not fresh spoil of

the fisherman, singing with old Isaak Walton along the banks of some silver stream,—all moved before her, fleeing as it were from the fixed gaze of those entranced and troubled eyes.

She turned at last, like one recovering consciousness after sleep; she gave one wistful look along the unsightly borders of that grand river which might be made so beautiful with quays and palaces, —and from which, as it is, London seems to rise like a grey dream of ugliness and confusion,— and once more she turned her steps homewards.

At the shop where she had left some of her best sketches, she went in to inquire their probable fate. Two young gentlemen and a lady were already there, and she had to wait. The party were admiring an oil sketch of Ruth gleaning in the corn-fields of Boaz: she saw them looking at her with curiosity, and whispering together. She then heard the question put to the shopman, whether she "had stood as a model for that drawing? it was very like her, and very like other sketches by the same artist." "No;"

the shopman thought she was an artist herself "in a humble way," and he carelessly slid over the counter one or two of the desert scenes she had offered. The lady of the party pushed them gently from her, saying she "did not care about landscapes, only figures;" and the gentlemen taking their canes and gloves from the counter, passed Beatrice, not uncourteously, but with the sort of contemplative glance of admiration, and made their way out into the street.

"I am afraid your drawings are not likely to sell, Miss," was all the shopman said to her.

"Could you advance anything upon them?" was the reply to his observation.

He smiled slightly. "No; I don't think we can feel encouraged to do that: but if you would call again in a week's time, we should be able to judge better about disposing of them. We will give what we can afford."

Beatrice did not feel offended; she did not feel shy; she felt as if she were acting in a dream. During the moment of hesitation before leaving

the shop, while listening to the answer of the man, she had lifted the drawing of Ruth, looked at it, and laid it down again. It *was* like; very like: she was conscious of it herself; she looked with a melancholy stare at the melancholy faithful eyes, whose expression seemed to answer her. She read the name of the artist in the corner of the drawing: a well-known famous name. She asked his address, bowed silently to the shopman, and passing out, took the direction of his studio.

She thought, as she wandered on, of Elisabetta Sirani; whose success was so great that her master was said to have poisoned her from jealousy; of Angelica Kauffmann and her exiled life at Rome; of many a tradition of bygone glory and feminine genius. Arrived at the house she sought, she was told to go up and knock at the door of his painting-room. A clear good-tempered voice from within desired her to enter, and as she did so, she saw the painter still standing by his canvas; a cigar inhis mouth, a blue velvet cap on his

head, and his hand resting on the mahl stick; occupied with a sketch faintly painted in, of Faust's Margaret in prison.

He took the cigar from his mouth, looked scrutinisingly at Beatrice, and said with a sort of patronising familiarity, "Well, my dear, are you also come to offer as a model? You are about the tenth young lady to-day. But my new picture is of Margaret, and I must have a fair model—a fair model with beautiful golden hair;" and as he spoke he turned from Beatrice, and dashed a line of light lovingly across the ideal head bowed in its prison dust, and shot a corresponding beam from the high and narrow prison window.

"I would be glad to sit as model," said Beatrice, simply and tremulously; "I thought of it because I am so like your Ruth; but I would be glad also to be employed helping—as—as a scholar! I am able to paint a little myself. I could begin. I could paint in backgrounds and draperies for you, and—"

"I do not want anything of the kind; I paint every stroke of my own pictures. You come less as model—than as a companion, young lady?"

Let it be forgiven him that he uttered the last words with somewhat of a vain and coxcombical smile; not looking at her, but still musing over his ideal Margaret, putting in a new touch of light or shadow, and softening it with his finger, standing back a little to judge the effect, and then again touching it; creating on the canvas the image of his brain.

"If you do not want my services for your own pictures, you might perhaps name other artists to me. I know your name, but I do not know many of the famous modern names; I have not been long in London."

With the last phrase, Beatrice's voice slightly faltered, and the painter turned and looked at her. She was still standing (he had not asked her to be seated), leaning wearily, her shoulder and cheek resting against the dark panel of the old-fashioned door of the painting-room; the lock still in her hand,

The practised eye of the artist ran over the lines of her figure, and was struck by its exquisite grace. The sad gravity of her earnest face; the implication, in her last question, that she had read of ancient art, though ignorant of "modern" names, drew from him the same puzzled attention the woman had granted her at Lewellyn's chambers in the Temple.

"Is it as a draped model you wish to sit? or—" he hesitated: "Mr. Howard, Mr. Uwin, draw from the undraped model: I do not."

The crimson flickered and died out again in Beatrice's cheek, while he considered her, pausing. His manner altered; he took his velvet cap off and tossed it on a table; laid his palette and brushes by it; drove the easel a few inches back by a movement of his foot, and drew a chair forward. "I wish I knew how I could serve you," he said kindly, as he motioned her to take it. "Have you ever sat before?"

Something like a moan escaped the weary lips. "Once," she said. Once. She remembered that

day. A day of Venetian sunshine; a background of palaces and shifting gondolas; the fond admiring eyes of Treherne watching her as she sat, and his disappointed face when he looked at the tracing made of her by the Gouglokoff. There was so much misery in that "Once," that the painter paused before he spoke again.

"Do you know what it is you undertake? and how little is earned by it? Do you know that tenpence an hour is a common scale of reward to models—even models as beautiful as you are?" He stopped abruptly, as though he did not wish to offend her by compliment.

But Beatrice's thoughts were not of compliments. She was musing bitterly on her own beauty—the beauty that had failed to chain the heart of the man she loved; which she was striving now to turn to account to earn her child's bread. She made one effort more. "I should be more useful than a common model, because I should understand better what was wanted. I should know—I should probably have read

most of the stories from which subjects are taken."

Again there was a pause of attention and interest, and the painter rapidly ran over his mind the possibility of painting his fair Margaret from that dark expressive face; but, no; it could not be. All his tints; all his reflected lights; impossible!

While he still pondered, Beatrice turned deadly pale, and leaned back in the chair.

He noticed it with a start. "Dear me, you seem much exhausted. Harriet!" and he called into an inner room. "Harriet, will you bring a glass of wine? It is my sister," added he, as the person he had summoned, a tall severe-looking maiden lady, entered with a decanter.

"Has the sitting been too long for Lady Fosbrooke?" she said, graciously.

"You mistake, Harriet. This young lady is a stranger to me; she has been consulting me about becoming a model."

"A MODEL!" The amazed horror with which the spinster sister looked at Beatrice as she

pronounced this word,—eyeing her from head to foot as she did so,—words cannot describe. "I thought Lady Fosbrooke was to sit to you to-day, John;" she said rather resentfully to her brother, dropping the stopper back into the decanter, as if already, as to poor Ophelia, too much of courtesy had been shown.—"A model! I advise you to do anything else you can, young woman! Teach anything; work at anything, if you are in distress; but don't turn MODEL!"

And with a parting glance of severe deprecation at the pale beauty of Beatrice's face, she disappeared again through the folding doors.

The painter smiled. "You must not mind my sister," he said. "She has her own views and her own ways, but she's a good soul for all that. Come again in a day or two; I will speak to a friend of mine who is painting a Judith. Pray do not leave the wine untasted; you are much fatigued; you will be ill."

But Beatrice did not hear him. She was already standing prepared to go. The bitter

words of her landlady seemed once more echoing in her ear, "You can't teach in families, because, to do that, *you must have a character.*"

She endeavoured to murmur a word of thanks as she passed through the re-opened door, but failed. The painter gazed at the blank panels of that door for a second or two after it had closed on her, and then, with a vexed exclamation at the rapid fading of the daylight, he turned back eagerly from the living sorrow to the dead canvas; to the dishevelled woes of his lovely Margaret—his Margaret, that was to be the pride and wonder of next year's exhibition, and make him a fame and name such as would put him at once at the head of his profession, proving him to be the very Rafael, or Correggio, of modern European art.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HUMBLE COMPANION.

And while he thus dreamed—as men will dream (and women too) of a proud and hopeful future—hopeless Beatrice walked to her deserted home. Little noticed; unmolested; in silent thought. It is a dream of romancists that your heroine's beauty cannot be seen without attracting as much attention as a comet. If a woman be modestly dressed, simple in manner, and obviously going honestly about her own avocations, she may walk—I do not say through the streets of Paris, but, be it said to the credit of Englishmen, certainly through any street in London—with perfect security. It is only when women are pranked and

rosetted as if on purpose to catch the attention of the other sex, when furtive conscious glances show them bound on some errand they would not care to have known, or where an insidious coquetry of manner and movement prove to the least discerning that their real feeling is that of the poet's dandy horseman, who would fain

Provoke the caper which he seems to chide,

that they run the risk of being addressed by men with whom they have no previous acquaintance.

Any eccentricity of dress or manner will double attention: the mistake of vain women is to believe that it doubles attraction. A beautiful Italian woman of rank was lately in England, who determined to be, and accordingly was, "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes" wherever she went. On this lady, at a brilliant fête, a young man was gazing with so set a stare, that a friend asked him, half in rebuke of his boldness, if he had never seen a beautiful woman before. "Many," was the reply,

"but never one who wore her hair outside her bonnet instead of inside."

Beatrice Brooke was as beautiful a woman as could be seen or imagined; but she reached Stratton Street without adventure and without remark, beyond that passing glance which Moore and Byron have both commemorated in poetry as given to faces we sometimes meet "in the world's crowd," and whose recurring loveliness comes back to us whenever we dream of beauty!

She reached home weary, dusty, discouraged, and with that stupefaction of all distinct thought which is the re-action in an over-busy brain. She found Frank peevish, sick, and suffering. Unaccustomed to be left for so many hours to strangers, timid, weakly, and restless, he had tried the patience both of the landlady and her maid, and had been, they told her, feebly wailing "about nothing" and impossible to pacify, for the last hour or two before she returned.

She laid him in her bosom, she caressed and fondled him, she spoke the sweet unmeaning

words which are mother's music to young children; but it was long before the feverish little creature could calm down from the excitement of his strangely spent day, cease from opening his eyes and his dry little lips with incessant demands for "cool milk," and sink into a *real* sleep.

At length it came, that blessing of slumber. He lay heavy on his mother's lap, like the little one in Scripture who was smitten down by the sultry heat of the Eastern harvest and "lay on his mother's knees till noon—and then he died." Beatrice was haunted by the chance recollection of that Bible story, as she looked down on his flushed face and languid limbs. Then as she gazed and gazed, she thought,—if that slumber *were* indeed death, would it be such a misfortune? What could be that child's future? What would become of him? What would become of her? The fatherless,—and the forsaken?

Forsaken! the word seemed to swing to and fro like a knell, through all the roll of cabs and carriages, and crash and roar of London

evening sounds, which held no one sound that could concern her. Never again to that door for her sake would carriage or foot-fall come, that could bring HIM. What could she and her babe do better than die? Who wanted them to live? As she gazed, the confusion increased in her brain. Between her and the sleeping child there seemed to creep a grey veil of turbid waters, like the river by the Temple gardens. Things seemed again to drift by as they had done that morning—the drowned creature with its side glistening in the sun—the leaves and straws and broken wood—all passed her, but with a strange sense of intense quiet. There seemed even a sort of music in the soft remembered lapping of that river against the wall. If she and little Frank were there, cold and still, how they might drift away and suffer no more!

On the fascination of suicide, volumes might be written; but all reasoning on that mystery resolves itself into the fact, too little noticed, that

it is rather a physical than a mental temptation. A man does not *debate* on self-murder; or if he does, he for that time avoids the act. It is not the Hamlet who stands with folded arms, arguing the "To be or not to be" who is most in danger of seeking his quietus with a bare bodkin. It is he who has to endure a sensation of helpless weariness in the soul, analogous to the helpless weariness sometimes felt in the body. A man no more says "I will endure so much, and then I will commit suicide," than he says "I will walk so many miles, and then I shall be so exhausted, I shall fling myself on the earth and rest." But in his walk, he suddenly pauses and says, "I can no more," like a soldier on a march he cannot make. And so the soul, taxed beyond the powers given, feels suddenly it "can no more," and drops from the battle-field of life to the rest of death!

After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well,—

is the sort of language which the great master of German literature puts into the mouth of

Wallenstein when lamenting his young and passionate friend, Max Piccolomini. The idea that predominates,—even in the very freshness of the great sorrow that is crushing the heart of the tormented hero,—is the PEACE attained by the sharer of his troubled victories and warlike struggles: the silence that for ever surrounds him: a silence in which "no evil boding hour can knell again!"

Dim and unreasoning as were the over-wearied thoughts of Beatrice, that was the contrast they also presented. Motionless and pale as she sat there, supporting her child on languid outstretched arms, as the famous kneeling Magdalen supports the cross,—she seemed to herself in a vision to rise up, and carrying the little one bound to her bosom in that wrapping shawl so that he cannot escape, to thread once more the dusty crowded streets, pass under the Temple gateway into the garden down by the river,—and plunging in with him, float and drift, and sink and drown, till both are borne onwards to darkness and peace!

Stronger and more distinct the vision grows. The demon temptation grapples at her heart; until at length it grows too strong, and what she sees, that she plans: that she will do. It is but a little pain; it is but a brief struggle; and both will be at rest. To-night she will do it, when it grows dark: the shadows of evening are already fast settling down. Soon she will take Frank and drown him and herself—very soon. She and her babe will trouble no one any more!

As she sits so, and muses in a horrid waking dream, she turns a little faint: her arms relax their hold—and the sleeping child slips from them and falls to the ground, waking with a startled cry of fear and pain!

Ah! how altered by that cry is the condition of Beatrice's mind! With what passionate tenderness she snatches up the helpless trouble of her heart, and searches with trembling hands and dilated eyes if so much as a scratch or a bruise have harmed the little one whose drowning death she imagined a few minutes since! How the

shock brings all the Real around her, and the false dream rolls away in misty vagueness and shuddering recollection, as if it were some dreadful night-mare vanishing with the morning dawn!

And through all this, what a remorseful consciousness of having sinned, through the rebellion of despair, against the God to whom alone belong "the issues of life and death."

On her bended knees, in passionate supplication, is Beatrice now. Forgive her, oh God! forgive Thy sinful creature, and visit not on her or her little weakling the mad thought of this trying hour. Let her poor Frank live: let *her* live, to toil and suffer for him; her comfort, her treasure, her sole remaining joy! Only do Thou help these Thy helpless creatures, Thou from whom alone cometh help; and suffer them not to perish.

Heaven sometimes chooses humble instruments to do its work. To the sobbing and passionate prayer of that young Hagar, no shining angel came, striking the glittering fount with radiance. Yet

as she knelt and wept, help was drawing nigh: help in weak and unexpected guise, but such help as God saw fit to send in that hour of forsaken need.

If Beatrice's sobs had been even less passionately loud, she might have failed to hear the tremulous little rap given at the street door, for that rap was given by the fragile hand of Parkes, who always conducted herself on all occasions, as if she had no right to go anywhere or be anywhere; a state of mind induced mainly by years of slavery in the service of the most noble the Marchioness of Updown, but also partly due to extreme natural timidity. She was ushered in, not by the servant, but by the landlady herself, who addressed Beatrice in a tone of vexed sympathy. "Oh! my dear Mrs. Bertram, do not fret so; here's a lady friend come, and I shall send in tea;" and putting a chair for Parkes, retired without further comment.

Parkes sat trembling on the very edge of the chair placed for her, looking at Beatrice, who had

risen from her knees, and who put out her hand with a sort of mechanical welcome. For one wild instant the thought of news of Treherne through this dependant of his aunt, traversed her brain, but it vanished as Parkes spoke.

"Oh! my dear," she said, "I do hope you won't be offended with me—I do indeed; but I couldn't bear not to come! I've waited till it was dark; I've been up and down, and about, some time, waiting to knock. The fact is, I was in the Temple when you went to try and see Mr. Lewellyn. I was there on business of my own; and I must think it most fortunate, that of all days in the year I should have this for a holiday—I that have not had a holiday now for nearly three years—for the Marchioness is gone to Windsor, and she said I might do what I liked with my day; and I thought I would go down the river in one of the penny boats to the village where I was born, and where my poor mother used to live, and just have a look at the place; though there's no soul lives there now that

remembers any of us—of course not; but still there's the little churchyard where she lies, you know, and the old houses—and I thought I'd pass a quiet day there, after my business was over, which was to pay a little debt for an old man, who used to be very kind to me when I was a child; a gardener he was then,—but he fell from a ladder and could do nothing, and now he 's threatened with the workhouse. Think of *my* being able to help any one, my dear; such a blessing! Well, just as I had done that, and was going to the boat, I saw *you*, and I wonder you didn't see *me*, but you was so absorbed! and I do hope you will forgive the liberty, but seeing you so distressed, I couldn't bear not to follow you; and I heard you ask about selling your beautiful drawings, and altogether I couldn't help guessing something very painful had happened; and knowing, you know, that—that persons were not in England who had been in England—and so, fearing —and thinking, perhaps, you would excuse my wish, if I could, to be of use; and having this

holiday, (so fortunate!) I came. But then it struck me you might not approve, and perhaps didn't wish your place of residence known; so I walked up and down till it was quite dark, and then I ventured; and if I could—if only I *could* do anything!" and poor Miss Parkes clasped her little hands, and looked about, as if some task could be set her by the tables and chairs, or by the cups and saucers which Mrs. Laing now handed in, with that steady belief in the efficacy of "a cup of tea" to soothe all human sorrow, which is the peculiar superstition of kindly landladies and attentive ladies'-maids.

Beatrice had sat perfectly still and silent during the rambling monologue of her humble friend. Her mind, once startled back to consciousness, was alive again with energy. The unselfish tenderness of the little woman, with her one rare holiday divided into service for others, smote her, but she did not let her thoughts pause upon it. The one reflection that Parkes's sudden presence suggested was, "Here is this poor, solitary,

feeble little woman getting her living independently by her own exertions; however uncomfortably. She must have made a beginning. She shall advise me, and I will abide by her advice." And then, with a resolute bluntness of speech which so amazed poor Parkes that she listened with her pale little mouth and eyes agape like a sick frog, she said:—

"Miss Parkes, unless you knew how miserable I am, you cannot tell how thankful I feel to you. Mr. Treherne has forsaken me. I am not married to him, though I thought I was. That is my baby, lying covered on that sofa. Mr. Treherne desired some money might be given for him and me. You will feel that cannot be. I want to earn my bread and Frank's. I want to leave these lodgings which *he* took and which are rich and good, for poor lodgings such as I myself could pay for. You asked if you could help me. Yes, dear Miss Parkes. Find me such a lodging, for I don't know London, and you do; and try to think what I can do to support

myself and my child. I have a little money from selling my coral ornaments, and when that is gone I have nothing."

Then Parkes, who had seemed so foolish and rambling in her timid talk, settled into good plain sense with her recovered courage; and they planned and talked, and talked and planned, and drank the tea (which Parkes also seemed rather inclined to think was a panacea for all human troubles); and she promised there should be no difficulty in finding Beatrice a lodging such as she desired. But with respect to earning her bread, there was always the insurmountable difficulty of "character." Parkes was compelled to admit that, solitary and friendless as she now was, she had had the blessing of character; nay, had had very earnest and strong recommendations to "her first situation" from the clergyman who had buried her mother, and had known her and her family—"an old old friend long ago gone to heaven, my dear." But meanwhile, Beatrice was to pack her clothes and get ready for departure,

and then they were to "flit" silently away, leaving a present for kind Mrs. Laing, but no address —no trace of where they had vanished into obscurity.

Slight were the preparations, for few were Beatrice's possessions; and when her humble friend called next morning, all was ready, and Beatrice was sitting mending the lace quilt which had been torn when Frank, who was wrapped in it, had fallen from her knees the evening before.

She went on working while good little Parkes explained that she had taken a lodging for Beatrice in Thanet Place—a court in the Strand close to the Temple; so that she could have fresh air for little Frank in those river-gardens, and live more cheaply than at the other end of the town; that there was but one other inmate of the house, a quaint old Frenchman who got his living by carving parasol, screen, and umbrella handles in ivory, and perhaps his employers might give something for any pretty new designs she might be able to draw. After

the pause which followed these explanations, Parkes, who had been watching the white fingers in their task of mending, suddenly said: — "My dear, excuse me, but is that lace you are mending your own?"

"Yes," said Beatrice; "it is mine; it was my mother's."

"And have you more of it?"

"Yes, a good deal more: I have flounces, and pelerines, and sleeves — old-fashioned, but very pretty. I used this for Frank's cradle cover."

"My dear, do you know what it is? It is the very finest Spanish point! most valuable! and you mend it as if you had made it. I never saw any one work so well before!"

"Yes. My poor mother was so very fond of it; she taught Mariana to mend and get up these beautiful laces, and Mariana taught me."

Parkes looked tremblingly inspired with eagerness. She laid her small thin hand on the statuesque fingers as if to stop their movement while she spoke. She said, "I have thought of some-

thing: if you are but good and humble enough. It is very hard, with all your beauty and all your cleverness, to come to that; but God tries all as He thinks fit. If I thought you would bow to circumstances, as you said you could, for the poor child's sake—"

"Miss Parkes, I will bow to anything; do not fear me; do be plain with me; do trust me."

"I will, I will. I am sure I was wrong to doubt; but it is such a mean employ! What I think is, that you really might get a living by the lace.'

"By selling my mother's lace!"

"Not exactly by selling it, though it is worth a great deal of money, a very large sum of money; but by mending and washing lace! It's not a hard employ, though it's a mean employ, for one like you" (and Parkes sighed regretfully); "still there are so few that can really do it well, and there are so many fine ladies who love their lace —oh! my dear, love their lace better than they love their children! and of course such lace as that is only worn by the rich and great, and if (I

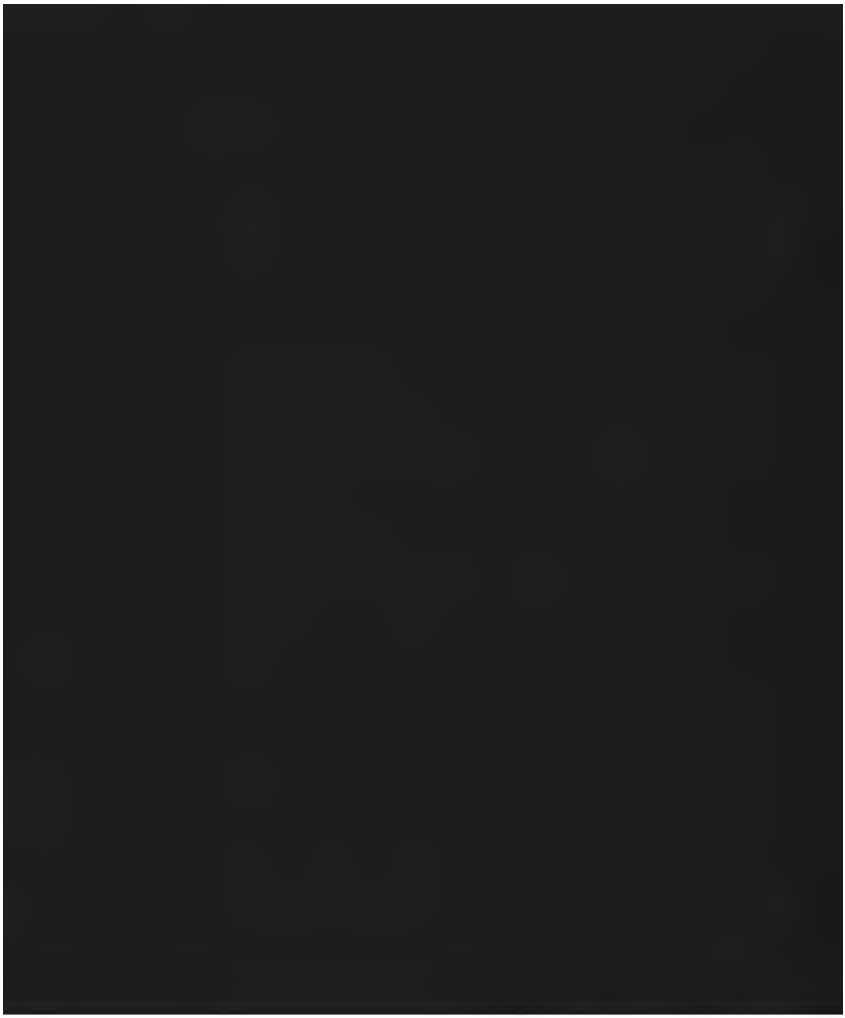
declare I think even *I* could do that)—if you could get introduced and recommended to the ladies themselves, without any intermediary employer between you and them to prevent profits on your work—then I think, yes, I feel quite sure, you could make really quite a genteel living!"

Parkes's smile of joy, as she said this, was a sight for the angels; and Beatrice kissed her faded little cheek with an impulse of affectionate warmth, while she added: "I declare I feel as glad as if some one had left me a fortune; for I really did *not* see how ever you were to get through your difficulties, till this struck me about the lace. How lucky it was torn last night, for else I might not have seen it, you know."

Beatrice's heart smote her. That wild hour in which she had contemplated suicide with her child! was it not then that the lace was torn? And this good, innocent, unselfish heart, rejoicing over her escape from beggary and privation, and talking to her as if she were so much her inferior,

was she not in fact the higher nature of the two? Beatrice felt humble, and prayed.

In the dusk of the evening Parkes came again, while the Marchioness was dining out, and Mrs. Laing at tea with her gossiping friends; and Beatrice departed to her new lonely home. A note of earnest thanks for Mrs. Laing's kindness, "ever since Frank was born,"—an enclosure of money to buy some trifling object as a keepsake to adorn the room she had occupied,—and a gratuity to the servant-maid,—were all the traces of Beatrice which Mrs. Laing was enabled to show (not without tears) to General Pryce Perry and Mr. Grey, when they called together, "to arrange for the fulfilment of Mr. Montagu Treherne's wishes with respect to Miss Brooke."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE, LONDON.